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Wanderings among Words

Henry Bett
M.A., Litt.D.

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TO
THE REVEREND
H. H. NEWHAM
OF
BANGALORE
IN REMEMBRANCE OF FORTY YEARS
OF UNBROKEN FRIENDSHIP

PREFACE

THE solitary excuse I can offer for the existence of this book is that I wanted to write it. The subject has always fascinated me. I have not loaded the volume with references, partly because it is intended for the general reader, and partly because it is quite impossible to catalogue all the authorities I have consulted during the varied reading of many years past.

I have transliterated Greek words where they bear directly on the derivation of English words, so that the reader who is not familiar with Greek may see the connection without difficulty.

I wish to acknowledge with much gratitude the kindness of my friend and colleague, the Rev. Dr. Thomas W. Taylor, who has read the proofs of the volume.

H. B.

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WANDERINGS AMONG WORDS

I

PRIMITIVE

THERE are some interesting words which plainly originate from a child's first attempts to articulate. Thus many of the words that mean father, mother, and baby seem to be derived from some syllable, often reduplicated, such as *ab* or *ba*, *pa* or *ma*, the simple sounds that a little child makes when it first begins to talk. The Aramaic *abba* is "father", and the Apostle writes of "the Spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*" (Rom. viii. 15). From this word, adopted into Latin, we have our "abbot", the father of a monastic community, and "abbey", the place over which he presides. The Latin *pater*, which is practically the same word as the Greek *pater*, gives us many words like "paternal", "paternity", and "patron", as the Latin *mater* (the Greek *mētēr*) gives us "maternal", "maternity", and "matron". But the Greek *pappas* also means father, with a special note of affection, and it is used as early as Homer. When Nausicaa is going to the river to wash the clothes she says to Alcinous, "Father dear (*pappa phū*), couldst thou not lend me a high

waggon with strong wheels?" So the Latin *papa* means father, and was early given as a title to bishops: hence a Greek priest is a "pope" and the Bishop of Rome is the "Pope". Here is the source of our words "papal", "papacy", "popish", "popery", and so on. It is an odd fact of history that ecclesiastical titles like those of the Pope of Rome and of a mitred abbot, with all their suggestion of solemn pomp, should have derived from what was first of all the prattle of a baby saying *ab-ba* and *pa-pa*, in the same way that the baby's *ba-ba* has given us his own name. So the baby's *ma-ma* has given us "mamma" for mother, and *mamma*, the Latin for breast, a word that is almost the same as the Greek *mammē*, which also means breast, but was used, too, for mother.

Now as there are words that have come from the prattling speech of infants, there are other words that preserve traces of the first attempts at speech on the part of early man. We all know that there are examples in every language of words which imitate the sound characteristic of the thing of which the word is the name. To give a simple instance, the name of the "cuckoo" is in French *coucou*, in German *Kuckuck*, in Latin *cuculus*, in Greek *kokkux*, a reproduction of the cry of the bird. That illustrates one great principle in the early development of language. The traces are often lost, but if we had the whole process before our eyes, we should

probably be able to see, in the case of every word, some relation between the sound of it and a natural sound associated with the thing indicated by the word in the first instance. There are enough traces left to justify us in saying that. Think, for example, of the way that the labials, or letters pronounced with the lips, which are the easiest of all sounds to make, prevail in words like "babble" and "baby", used of simple and almost meaningless utterance, and of a mere infant who is only capable of such speech. Or think of the way that sibilants (so called from the Latin *sibilare*, to hiss) occur in words like "snake" and "serpent", where they suggest the reptile's hiss. So the liquid letters predominate in words like "moan" and "murmur", where their continued note represents a low and muttering sound, like that of the waves on the shore, or the humming of insects. So again the dentals characterize words like "hit" and "batter", which represent the sound of one thing falling upon another, like the blow of a hammer on the anvil. The sound is obviously imitative and descriptive when we find *b* at the beginning of words like "blow", "blast", "bluster"; *gr* at the beginning of words like "groan", "growl", "grunt"; *k* at the end of words like "crack", "smack"; "whack"; *p* at the end of words which describe a stopped movement, like "clap", "snap", "flop", "stop"; *mp* at the end of words which describe

a stopped movement of a heavier kind, like "bump", "jump", "thump"; *sl* at the beginning of words which describe a smooth movement, like "slip", "slide", or a smooth surface, like "sleek", "slope"; *scr* at the beginning of words which describe a rough sound, like "scratch", "scrape", or a harsh outcry, like "scream", "screech". There cannot be the slightest doubt that most words originated, when language was coming into existence, by way of an imitation of a particular sound specially characteristic of a particular thing. But in the case of many primitive elements in words this relation can no longer be traced.

It has been remarked by etymologists that the two letters—*st* are found in many words in many different languages which express the sense of stability. Restricting ourselves for the moment to words in English, native or naturalized, let us think of *stand*, *stay*, *stop*, which all mean the act of *standing* still; *stable*, *steadfast*, *still*, which all mean the state of *standing* still or *standing* fast; *stage*, *station*, *stall*, *state*, which all mean something that *stands* still or *stands* firm; *stanch*, which means to bring a flow of blood to a *stand*; *stare*, which means to *stand* still and look at anything; *statue*, which means a *standing* image; *stature*, which means the height a man *stands*; *stanza*, which really means a verse after which there is a stop, where for a moment

the poem *stands* still; and many other words. So in Greek we have *histēmi*, to *stand* still, to set, to be placed; and *stasis*, a *standing*, position, post, station; and *staitheros*, *standing* firm, fast, fixed; and *statikos*, bringing to a *stand-still*, and hence astringent; and *stēlē*, a *standing* stone, a monument, a post; and *stamin*, anything that *stands* up; and *stadion*, that which *stands* fast, hence a fixed measure of length, and so a race-course. Then in Latin we have *stare*, to *stand* still; and *statio*, a *standing* still, a station, an abode; and *status*, a *standing*, a position, a posture; and *stabulum*, a *stand*, a stall, a dwelling; and *stagnum*, *standing* water, a pool, a puddle. It is surely quite evident that in some primitive form of Aryan speech *st!* meant *stop!* *stand still!* The old Latin poet writes:

“Isis et Harpocrates digito qui significat *st!*”¹

and we know how natural the exclamation is. When prehistoric man was pursuing his prey, or being pursued by his foe, it looks as if *st!* meant *stand still!* with the double meaning of the two words, both “Do not make a noise!” and “Do not move!”

The Greek and Latin words quoted above have given us many of our English words, like “static”, “stadium”, “stagnant”, “status”, “statute”, “sta-

¹ ap. Varro, *L.L.*, iv. 10.

tion", and "stable"—both the noun "stable", or the place where horses are kept, from the Latin *stabulum*, and the adjective "stable", or firm, from the Latin *stabilis*, in both cases through an Old French form *estable*.

A whole series of words and names derives from the naïve fact that a primitive tribe always regards its own speech as an intelligible language, and the speech of other tribes as gibberish. The Greeks called the other nations "barbarians" (*barbaroi*) because they seemed to talk unintelligibly, as if they babbled *bar-bar-bar*. We read in Genesis xi. 9 that "the name of the city was called Babel, because the Lord did there confound (*balal*) the language of all the earth", and we can see how instinctively these sounds are used to represent unintelligible speech if we remember our word "babble", and the French *babiller*, and the German *babbeln*, all used of chattering and almost meaningless utterance. The Dutch settlers in South Africa called the natives Hottentots, because their unintelligible language, with its characteristic clicks, sounded like *hot-tot-hot-tot*. It is probable that the Tartars, properly the Tatars, derived their name from the Chinese *ta-ta*, a barbarian, a word exactly parallel to *barbaros*, as if the foreigners babbled *ta-ta-ta*. The word Tartar has probably been associated with *Tartarus*, the Latin word for hell, and assimilated with it in

sound—a circumstance that is not to be wondered at if we remember the fiendish cruelties of the Tartar invasions.

On the other hand, some nations have called themselves by a name that means "intelligible", obviously because their own speech seemed the only intelligible one, and all other languages like meaningless jabber. "Deutsch", the name by which the Germans call themselves (and which we have misapplied, as "Dutch", to the Hollanders), probably has some etymological connection with words like *deuten*, to explain, and *deutlich*, distinct, with the implication that those who were *Deutsch* spoke plainly and intelligibly, unlike the rest of mankind.

There are some other interesting words which derive from the names which early peoples gave to themselves. A German tribe conquered Gaul in the sixth century. They called themselves the "Franks", the *free* men. Hence the name "France", and also the name of the German province of "Franconia" (*Franken*), the region where the eastern Franks dwelt. The coin known as a "franc" was minted in the fourteenth century, and bore the legend *Francorum Rex*; hence the name. A "frank" statement or disposition is a *free* utterance or a *free* temper. To "frank" a letter is to secure its *free* passage. The "franchise" is exercised by *free*

men. Shakespeare uses "enfranchised" in the sense of freed in *Antony and Cleopatra* (III. i3. 149), where Antony says:

"Tell him he has
Hipparchus, my enfranchised bondman, whom
He may at pleasure whip, or hang, or torture,"

and we still use "enfranchised" in that sense. A "franklin" means originally a *free* man. "Frankincense" is the best kind of incense, *free* having a secondary sense of good. The name "Francis" derives from the same root as *frank*. All Europeans in the East are called "Franks", probably because of the leading part taken in the Crusades by the French, and Byron makes the Greek patriot in the early nineteenth century cry:

"Trust not for freedom to the Franks—
They have a king who buys and sells;
In native swords, and native ranks,
The only hope of courage dwells."

The Indian name for a European is "Ferringhee", or Frank. And the *lingua franca* is a kind of degenerate Italian spoken in the Levant, and means the language of the Franks, or Europeans.

Our word "slave" is derived from another tribal name, and acquired the sense of bondman simply because the Slavs were conquered and reduced to bondage, as defeated tribes often were in early days.

So "helot", the name for a slave among the Spartans, is said to be derived from Helos,¹ because the inhabitants of that city had been reduced to slavery. Pausanias says that the place was "founded by Heleus, the youngest son of Perseus, and the Dorians in after days reduced it by siege. Its inhabitants were the first slaves of the Lacedaemonian commonalty, and were called Helots, from the place of their birth. Afterward 'helot' was the general name the Dorians gave their slaves, even when they were Messenians."²

We get our word "host", in the sense of army, now used only in some imaginative reference, like "the hosts of the Lord", through the Old French, from the Latin *hostis*. The Latin word meant originally a stranger, a foreigner, then an enemy, and then the enemy in arms. It is thus a vivid memorial of the early days when the members of your own tribe alone could be trusted to be friendly, and when every man who was a stranger was presumably an enemy. The Latin *hospes* is related to *hostis*, and also means a stranger, but here the word has developed along the better line, and signifies a stranger in the sense of a visitor and a guest. Hence our "hospitality", "hospital", "hostel",

¹ ΟἽ τ' ἄρ' Ἀμύκλας εἶχον "Ἐλος τ', ἔφαλον πτολεθρον.
Iliad, II. 584.

² *Description of Greece*, III. 20.

and "hotel", and also "host", in the sense of one who entertains guests.

The ancient Egyptian name for Egypt was *Kemi*. It is equivalent to the Hebrew name "Ham", which means "swarthy". *Kemi* means "black", and Egypt was called "the black land", doubtless because of the dark colour of the mud left behind when the annual flood of the Nile receded. Now the Egyptians were pioneers in working metals and other substances, and such processes were known as the arts of Egypt, or *Kemi*. It is probably because of this that *kemi* passed into Greek as *chēmeia*, and into Arabic (with the article) as *al-kimiya*, whence we have our words "alchemy" and "chemistry".

There was a Stone Age when early man made all his implements out of stone, before he had learned the use of the metals, and there is a memory of this in at least one English word, for our word "hammer" is akin to the Old Norse *hamarr*, which means both "rock" and "hammer"—a plain trace of the early days when a stone was used for a hammer, as for much else in the way of tools and weapons. The Basque names for various implements such as knives, axes, picks, and scissors, are all compounded with the word *aitz*, stone, though the tools are made of steel, and have been for ages past. Thus "knife" is *aitztaoa*, little stone. It is quite

possible, by the way, that the French *hache* derives from the Basque *aitz*, and *hache*, through the diminutive *hachette*, is the source of our word "hatchet". The Latin *saxum*, stone, is probably related to *secare*, to cut, and to the Old German *sahs* and the Anglo-Saxon *seax*, a knife. The "Saxons" are said to be so called from the *seax* or short sword which they used, and the arms of Saxony to this day are three short swords.

There are some words that preserve the memory of the early importance and value of iron. We are all familiar with the word "obelisk" applied to a monument like Cleopatra's Needle. The word "needle" here is almost a translation, for the Greek *obelos* means a spit, and *obeliskos* means a little spit, and *belos*, which is practically the same word, means an arrow, a dart. Now a familiar Greek coin was called an *obolos*, and here is a plain trace of primitive usage. The early Greeks seem to have used for coin little rods of iron which they called "spits", and as six of these made a handful they called a coin which was worth six obols a *drachmē*, a "handful", from *drassomai*, to grasp with the hand. (This word, of course, is the "drachma", the modern Greek coin, and it is also our "drachm" and "dram", first in the sense of a small measure—a pinch of anything taken with the fingers of the hand—and then in the sense of a small measure of strong drink.) We may

remember that Sparta, which was characteristically conservative, used iron money down to historic times. So in the age of Caesar iron was made into bars and rings to serve as money in Britain. There are many examples of iron and other metals, often made into small rods for the purpose, being used as a primitive equivalent for coin, especially where the metals were scarce or where the natives did not know how to get and work the ore. The early voyagers to West Africa in the sixteenth and seventeenth century were able to secure provisions for their crews by paying the natives for sheep and oxen with odd bits of old iron, nails, hoops, and the like. And it is recorded that when the Scots raided the north of England in the Middle Ages they preferred anything made of iron, such as axes, sickles, ploughshares, and so on, to any other kind of spoil. Holinshed, in his *Chronicle*, describing one of the Scottish raids into England in the reign of Edward II, says: "They met with no iron worth their notice until they came to Furness in Lancashire, where they seized all they could find, and carried it off with the greatest joy; and although so heavy of carriage they preferred it to all other plunder". It has been noted that on a manorial farm in the Middle Ages one of the largest items of expenditure was always the cost of iron for the farm implements.

The original meaning of the Greek *obelos* reminds me of the English word "haselet", sometimes wrongly spelt "acelet". The "haselets" I have often seen for sale in pork-butchers' shops in Lincolnshire are, I believe, a sort of mincemeat of pork. The word used to mean some part of the inwards of a wild boar. In the old translation of Rabelais by Sir Thomas Urquhart we read, in Bridlegoose's account of Peter Dendin, that "there was not a hog killed within three parishes of him whereof he had not some part of the *haslet* and puddings". The word is from the Old French *hastelet* and meant originally something roasted on a spit. So the modern French *hâtier* (formerly *hastier*) means a spit-rest. The Old French *haste*, a spit, is from the Latin *hasta*, a spear. The word is a vivid reminder of the early days when a hunter kindled a fire and roasted a part of his prey on the point of the spear with which he had killed it.

The relation between the words "intoxication", used of drunkenness, and "toxophilite", used of a modern exponent of archery, is alone enough to point to a grim trace of prehistoric savagery. The Greek *toxon* means a bow, and *toxikon* means poison for arrows. The latter word has passed into English in the compound "toxicology", the science of poisons, and the Latin *toxicare*, from *toxicum*, poison, has given us "intoxicate", which is literally

to poison with strong drink; while *toxon*, through the title of the sixteenth-century book of Ascham, *Toxophilus*, which is a treatise on archery, has given us "toxophilite", a lover of the bow. It was evidently a familiar practice in prehistoric days, as it still is among savages in many parts of the world, to imbue the tips of arrows with a deadly poison.

A good many of our common implements and utensils retain traces of their primitive origin in their names. The word "box" derives from the box-tree, in Latin *buxus*, which from meaning the tree comes to mean box-wood, and then things made of box-wood, and so a chest or "box". The box-tree in Greek is *puxos*, whence *puxis*, properly a box made of box-wood, and then generally a box, whence *pyxis*, and "pyx", the box in which the consecrated wafer is kept in a Catholic church.

The "trunk" in which we pack our clothes when we travel may now be made of leather, or of many other materials, but the word derives from the Latin *truncus*, the trunk of a tree, because the original chest was simply a tree trunk hollowed out. The other uses of the word are obvious—the "trunk" of the body with the limbs attached to it is like the stem of the tree with the branches springing from it, a "trunk"-line is one of the main stems of the system, from which other lines branch out, and so on. The "truncheon" borne by the police also

derives its name from *truncus*, through the French *tronc* and the diminutive *tronçon*.

One of the earliest kinds of boat was a "dug-out". The Greek *skaptein* means to dig, and *skaphē* signifies anything dug out, or scooped out, like a trough or a tub, and then a light boat, the Latin *scapha* and our "skiff", because a primitive boat was, like Robinson Crusoe's, hollowed out of the trunk of a tree. We still speak of the "skin" and "seams" of a ship, though the skin is of steel and the seams are riveted. The words go back to the days when another early type of boat, like the Welsh coracle, was made of the skins of animals sewed together and stretched over a light framework of wood or wicker. It was an advance on this when boats were properly built of wood, and another advance when they were built larger, and could be decked or covered over; the "deck" of a ship is simply the "cover" of it, and when we say that we "deck" anything with flowers or ribbons the primitive meaning is that we *cover* it with these adornments, and hence beautify it. The seams of a wooden ship used to be caulked with oakum. The word "caulk" is from the late Latin *calcare* (from *calx*, lime) and originally meant to daub with lime or mortar. The primitive process of caulking was plastering a coracle over with clay, or any like material, to make it watertight. The skins of animals were used for many other

things besides the primitive coracle. Our word "bottle", which now means a vessel made of glass, is from the late Latin *būticula*, a diminutive of *būtis* or *būtis*, which meant a cask, though originally it meant a wine-skin. This is also the source of our English word "butt", and thence of our other word "butler", for the butler was originally in charge of the butts of wine and ale.

Many words describing the dwellings of men go back to primitive times and primitive habits. Our word "town", the Anglo-Saxon *tūn*, at first meant an enclosure, and the German *Zaun* still means a hedge. A town was originally a stockaded settlement. The Latin *vallum*, wall, meant first of all a palisaded mound. We derive our word "interval", by the way, with all its variety of meanings, musical and otherwise, from *intervallum*, which originally meant the space between two palisades. We still speak of the "bole" of a tree, but we hardly recognize the word, until it is pointed out to us, in "bulwark" and "boulevard". A "bulwark" is a "bole-work"—a stockade or rampart made of the trunks of trees. When the "bulwarks" or "boulevards", the defensive ramparts of Paris, were levelled and made into streets they retained the name of "boulevards", and the word "boulevard" has come into common use for a wide road, generally planted with trees.

A "cove" now means a creek. But a comparison

with a series of cognate words like the Greek *gupē*, a vulture's nest, or a hole in the ground, and *kupē*, a hut, and the Anglo-Saxon *cōfa*, chamber, cell, and the Old Norse *kefi*, hut, is enough to point to the earliest form of human dwelling, a sort of pit in the ground. So, too, there is a relation between our word "bed" and the stem of the Latin *fodere*, to dig out. Some of the earliest habitations of men were shallow pits scooped out of the earth, and roofed over with boughs and grass.

It was an advance on this when men learned to plant stakes in the ground, and weave thin branches in and out around them, and then plaster the whole with clay; a primitive method of building of which examples still survive in England. The German word *Wand* means a wall, but is generally used in the sense of a partition wall between rooms, while *Mauer* would be used for a wall of masonry. Now *Wand* derives from *winden*, *wand*, the verb that means to wind or twist, undoubtedly because the first walls were made of withes twisted together and covered with mud—what we call "wattle and daub". Our word "wall", the Anglo-Saxon *weall*, was borrowed from the Latin *vallum* before our ancestors left their home on the Continent, and, as we have seen, *vallum* at first meant a place that was staked round, or palisaded.

Some interesting words go back to the food of

primitive man. Our word "beech", the Anglo-Saxon *bēc*, is related to the Latin *fagus*, which also means beech. The Greek *phēgos* means oak, but both *phēgos* and *fagus* are derived from a root (*phag*, *fag*) which means to eat, as in the Greek *phagein*. Now acorns and beech-mast were the food of swine, and often formed part of the food of man in primitive days, with the result that the oak and the beech were named from a word that had the significance of eating.

A great many words have developed from some primitive syllable which referred to the cultivation of the soil, whence man derives his food. The first suggestion of this is lost, but it is quite evident that there is some such primitive sound as *ar* which had a meaning connected with tillage or agriculture. There are abundant evidences of this in every Aryan language. Thus the Greek *aroun* and the Latin *arare* mean "to plough", and so does our old English word *ear*. Chaucer uses the word in *The Knight's Tale* (886-887):

"I have, God woot, a large feeld to *ere*,
And wayke been the oxen in my plough."

So in *Piers the Plowman* (v. 4), where Perkyn says:

"I haue an half acre to *erye* · bi the heighe way."

So also in Shakespeare, as in *All's Well That Ends Well* (i. 3. 47), where the clown says: "He that *ears* my land spares my team and gives me leave

to in the crop". The word occurs also in the Authorised Version of Isaiah xxx. 24: "The oxen and the young asses that *ear* the ground". The Anglo-Saxon *erian*, to plough, belongs to what is called a West Aryan source. That is to say, there is no related word in Persian or Sanscrit, but there are related words in most of the languages of Europe. Evidently some Aryan tribes who came westward, and gave names to some of the familiar trees of Europe, like the beech and the elm, settled down as cultivators of the soil, and developed words connected with husbandry. "Earth" is probably from the same root as *erian*. In older English "earable" was used for "arable". The Greek *arotron* and the Latin *aratum* mean "a plough", and our English *harrow* means a similar instrument; *aroura* and *agros* in Greek, *arvum* and *ager* in Latin, mean "a field"; the Greek *aroma* means first "arable land", and then "spice", because of the fragrant smell of a newly ploughed field, and so we get our word *aroma*; *harvest* means "the fruit of the field"; the Greek *artos* means "bread", produced from it; the Greek *ergon* means "work", since most of the work of early man was tillage; *earnings* are the reward of such work; *art* is from the Latin *ars*, *artis*, which meant originally "skill in doing any kind of work"; and the very name *Aryan*, given to the races and languages of most of Europe, is from the same root,

and originally meant "a possessor of tilled land", and therefore a member of the dominant race. Scores of other examples of the presence in our words of the same root might be given.

The Latin *agricola*, from *ager* and *colere*, to till, means a husbandman, and *agricultura* has given us our word "agriculture". Since agriculture is the most necessary and universal kind of work, and the most primitive, it is natural that words meaning work should derive from it, as we have seen with *ergon*, and so our English word "toil" is closely related to "till."

Then we find that many of our words which come to us from Latin, and have developed a widely different sense from that of the original root, really go back to the processes of agriculture, as we have seen with still more primitive words. "Delirious" derives from the Latin *delirare*, which means originally "to plough a crooked furrow", and then "to go astray in your senses" to be foolish, to be mad, to rave. Our word "prevaricate" derives in a very similar way, for *praevericari* also means "to plough crookedly", and thence "to go from the line of duty", especially in a court of justice, when an advocate was guilty of collusion with the opposing party, and so to evade the truth, to quibble. The word "season", which we use of any period of the year, is the French *saison*, which is probably from

the Latin *satio, sationis*, a sowing, a planting, and meant first "the period of seedtime", and then any other period recurring annually.

What is the relation between the "coulter" of a plough, the "cultivation" of the ground, the "culture" of an educated man, a sailor's "cutlass", a "cutlery" works at Sheffield, and a literary "cult"? The *coulter* is the foreiron of a plough: the Latin *culter*, from *colere*, to till, first means a ploughshare, and then a knife of any sort, and it is with the plough-share that the ground is tilled or *cultivated*; and when the mind is cultivated by study the result is intellectual *culture*; and a *cutlass* is the French *couteletas* (from the Latin *cultellus*, a diminutive of *culter*); and a *cutler* (or *couteletier*) is a man who makes knives; and a *cult* is a devotion to anything (ultimately from the Latin *colere, cultum*, which first means to till, and then to bestow pains upon and care for, and so to cherish, to honour, to worship). The Latin *cultellus*, by the way, has not only given us *cutlass*, but also, by a corruption of that word, "curtle-axe" (as if it meant a short axe). When Rosalind says, in *As You Like It*, that she will appear in "all points like a man", with:

"A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh
A boar-spear in my hand,"

she means a sword.

When the harvest was reaped the corn had to be separated from the straw, and the various words in different European languages related to "thresh" make it certain that the original meaning was to trample. The earliest method of separating the corn from the ear was to tread it out. The flail was a later device. The first meaning is retained in our word "threshold", which is what you tread upon in entering the house. It was an advance on treading out the corn when some threshing implement was devised, and our word "tribulation" comes from the Latin *tribulum*, which meant a primitive implement of this kind, a sort of drag with teeth, which was drawn over the corn as it was spread on the ground, to beat out the grain. This suggested a natural and vivid metaphor, and *tribulare* came to mean to oppress, afflict, torment, and so we speak of being in "tribulation".

The herding of cattle was an early occupation, and has left many traces in the languages of the world. When we speak of a man's "impecunious" condition, or of a "pecuniary" reward, we are using a word that derives from the Latin *pecunia*, property, money, which again derives from *pecus*, cattle, because in a primitive age cattle were the principal means of barter. Two other Latin words have the same source, *peculium*, private property, and *peculiaris*, belonging exclusively to some par-

ticular person: hence our "peculiar" and "peculiarity". Then, from the same source again, *peculari* means to embezzle the public goods or money, and so we have our "peculate" and "peculation". So the Anglo-Saxon *feoh* means first cattle and then money, and this is the source of our "fee". This is related to the late Latin *feudum*, and so to the source of "feudal" and of "fief". It has been pointed out that the importance of cattle as a principal source of wealth and a principal standard of value in ancient Greece is illustrated in several feminine names, like Polyboia and Stheneboia, which mean "many oxen" and "strength of oxen", and suggest that the bearers of these names will command a large price as brides. The ox long continued to be a unit of value. So Homer tells us that when the two heroes exchanged their armour, "Zeus took from Glaukos his wits, in that he made exchange with Diomedes, Tydeus' son, of golden armour for bronze, the price of five score oxen for the price of nine", *χρύσεα χαλκείων, ἐκατόμβοι ἐννεαβούων*.¹

So our words "capital", "chattel", and "cattle" are all derived from the Latin *capitalis*, stock, property, from *caput*, head. Under Roman law in early times each citizen was taxed according to the number of cattle he possessed, on so many "head" of beasts. It may be added that our word "egregious"

¹ *Iliad*, vi. 236.

is from *e*, out of, and *grex*, *gregis*, the herd, and originally means selected from the herd, and hence, in its first significance, "eminent", "excellent", though it has come to mean prominent in a bad sense. Another word which derives from the same area is "centre", for the Latin *centrum* is manifestly the same word as the Greek *kentron*, goad. The word was naturally applied to the unmoving point of a pair of compasses, and thence to the centre of the circle which the compasses described.

The respect paid to old age in early times is shown in several of our familiar words. "Priest" is the same word as "presbyter"; when Milton said, in his dislike of the Presbyterians of the Commonwealth, that "new presbyter is but old priest writ large" he was stating the exact opposite of the etymological truth. "Priest" is shortened from "presbyter", which is simply the Greek *presbuteros*, elder; originally the word meant an old man, and then naturally acquired a quasi-official sense, since the elders were often the rulers. We have a similar example in our English "alderman", which is the Anglo-Saxon *ealdormann*, from *ealdor*, a chief, a leader, from *eald*, old. So our "sir" and "sire", the French *sieur* and *seigneur*, the Italian *signore*, and the Spanish *señor*, are all from the Latin *senior*, elder.

Some words are still eloquent of the toilsomeness

and danger which attended a journey in early days. "Travail" and "travel" are really the same word, and "travail" is the earlier sense. It appears to derive from the Latin *trabaculum* (from *trabs*, a beam), for a kind of frame in which farriers put restive horses while shoeing them. The old English word "trave" is still the name of this implement. From meaning "constraint" and hence "trouble", it comes to mean "work" (the French *travail*). Thence comes the sense of laborious journeying or "travel". So "fear" is cognate with "fare", which may have a primitive sense of the dangers that beset you when faring forth on a journey. It may be added that "explore" (the Latin *explorare*, from *plorare*, to weep, to cry out) in the primitive sense is to give a warning shout when you discover the foe: hence to reconnoitre, and so generally to investigate and discover.

Some of the numeral words are of great interest because of the traces they retain of the prehistoric development of mankind. Thus our word "five", and the corresponding words in all the European languages, *cinq*, *fünf*, *quinque*, *πέντε*, and the rest, are all related to the Sanskrit *pani*, hand, because man first learned to count on the fingers of one hand. The word *πεμπάζειν*, which means "to count" in the Greek of Homer, is derived from *πέμπειν*, Aeolic for *πέντε*, and originally meant "to count on the five fingers". The Roman numerals I, II, III,

iii, represent one, two, three, four fingers, and v represents the whole hand, the forked shape made by the four fingers held close together and the thumb apart. The word *five* is the same word as *hand* in the speech of Labrador, at one end of the world, and of Siam at the other, and in the language of savage peoples almost everywhere. In consequence quinary numeration has left many interesting traces, as in the Roman numerals, again, where vi, vii, viii represent "five-and-one", "five-and-two", "five-and-three", and in Welsh, where "un-ar-bymtheg, dau-ar-bymtheg", are "one-and-fifteen", "two-and-fifteen", and so on.

Then our word "ten" is related to the Latin *decem* and the Greek *deka*, which are connected with *daktulos*, finger. For it occurred to some prehistoric genius, after men had learned to count to five, that he had two hands, and could go on checking off things on the rest of his fingers, and so he got up to ten, and the word for ten was obviously at first "the fingers", exactly as many savages, like the Tamanacs of the Orinoco, say for ten "both hands". Then the words "eleven" and "twelve" (in Gothic *ainlif* and *twalif*) really mean "one-left-over", and "two-left-over", when all the fingers have been counted up to ten.

Another interesting word is "calculate", which also carries us back to primitive reckoning. *Calculus*

means a pebble, and men did some of their first reckoning with pebbles, which they used as counters. The modern mathematician still calls some of the higher branches of mathematics by the name of a "calculus"—"the infinitesimal calculus", and so forth. There are interesting parallels to this in several languages. Thus the Mexicans, when they were first discovered, had a developed numerical system and could reckon well, but the word *tetl*, stone, remained as an element in one of their sets of numerals, so that the words for one, two, three, were *centetl*, *ontetl*, *etetl*, literally "one-stone", "two-stone", "three-stone," and so on. So also in Malaya and in Java, where *sawatu* meant "one-stone" and *sawiji* "one-seed", and so forth.

There are many interesting words which retain traces of primitive conceptions of religion. Thus it is a singular and striking fact that the word "spirit" in every European language is derived from a word that means "breath" or "wind". The Greek *pneuma*, spirit, is from a root that means "to breathe" (*pnein*). The Latin *spiritus* is also from a word that means "to breathe" (*spirare*). We use these words in the primitive sense in English when we speak of a "pneumatic" tyre, or a tyre filled with air, and of "pneumonia", which is an inflammation of the breathing organs, and in words like "respire", to breathe repeatedly, and "expire", to breathe

out, and hence to die. So the Latin *anima*, soul (which is akin to the Greek *anēmos*, wind), means, first, breath, then life, then soul. We have many words in English derived from the root, like "animal", a living creature, "animate", to make alive, and "animus", which from meaning in Latin the rational spirit, comes to mean the disposition of the spirit, and then loftiness of spirit, or pride, and finally prejudice against another person. Then in Hebrew, again, the word *ruach*, spirit, originally means "wind". And our native English word "ghost", used either of an apparition, the spirit of a dead person, or of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God, is akin to the word "gust", and originally means "breath" or "wind".

The way that all these words developed their final sense is quite obvious when you think of it. A man breathes as long as he lives; when the breath ceases he dies. So "breath" came to mean "life", and when primitive man first attained the conception of a spiritual life—that there was a soul animating the body, and that when the body died the soul did not—it was natural that the "breath" should come to mean the "spirit". The breath was there while the soul was in the body, and the breath ceased when the soul left the body. "The breath has gone" came to mean "the spirit has gone". So it was out of the simple word "breath" that men first formed their

words to express a life other than the life of the body, and a world other than the world we see—a spiritual life and a spiritual universe.

"Heaven" is the sky, *heaved* up above the earth. We still speak of the starry heavens, and heaven in the sense of the abode of the blessed is really a special use of the word. So "hell" is the *covered* place beneath the ground, as the "hull" is the covered part of a ship, and as to "heal" a sore is to cover it with skin. At first "hell" meant merely the underworld, the world of the dead, as it does in the Creed, where "He descended into hell" means "He went down into the world of the dead". It was only gradually that the word narrowed its meaning to "the place of torment". It was very natural when men began to think of a spiritual world, that they should think of the bright and lofty sky as the abode of God, and of the deep dark abyss beneath as the place of death and finally of woe. It was a profound instinct that made men identify all that is good with light, and the upward way, and all that is evil with darkness, and the downward way.

II

GREECE AND ROME

A GREAT many English words come from the mythology of Greece and Rome. Thus when a map is described as an "atlas" the word almost certainly derives from the circumstance that some early maps and geographical works bore as an emblem the figure of Atlas, with the world on his bent shoulders. Atlas was one of the Titans. The myth is that Perseus, in revenge for the inhospitality of Atlas, showed him Medusa's head, which turned all who saw it into stone. Atlas was changed into the mountain in the north-west of Africa which bears his name, and which is so high that to the ancients it seemed to bear up the skies. Another form of the myth is that in punishment for taking part with the giants in their wars against the gods, Jove doomed Atlas to bear the heavens on his shoulders. It is from Mount Atlas, which seemed to the Greeks to be on the very edge of the world, that the western ocean is called the "Atlantic".

When we speak of breakfast "cereals" we are referring to Ceres, the daughter of Saturn and Vesta, who was the goddess of corn and harvest. When we speak of a "chimerical" project we are referring

to the mythical monster called the chimaera, with three heads which vomited flames, the heads and the different parts of the body resembling a lion, a goat, and a dragon. (The Greek *chimaira* means a she-goat.) When a chemist says that a vessel is "hermetically" sealed, he is using the name of Hermes Trismegistus, "the Thrice Great", the Greek name for the Egyptian god Thoth, the patron of magic and alchemy, whose sign or seal was thought by the mediaeval alchemists to render anything impenetrable and inaccessible. And, curiously enough, when a theologian speaks of "hermeneutics", or the science of the interpretation of Scripture, he is also using the name of Hermes, for the Greek word *hermeneus*, or interpreter, derives from Hermes, the god of speech and writing and eloquence. A "herculean" task refers to the fabled labours of Hercules, and the science of "hygiene" derives its name from Hygieia, the goddess of health and the daughter of Aesculapius. The Roman god Janus was represented with two faces, "looking before and after". The beginnings of things were sacred to him. Hence the name of the month of "January". "Janitor" (a word much more in favour on the other side of the Atlantic than here) is from *janua*, a door, and Janus was the deity who presided over doors and entrances generally. Jupiter Ammon has given us both

"ammonia", which is from *sal ammoniac*, named from Ammonia, the Libyan region near the shrine of the god, where the salt was said to have been obtained at first, and "ammonite", the geologists' word for a fossil once called *cornu Ammonis*, from a fancied resemblance to the horns with which the god was represented, as in Milton's reference in the *Ode on the Nativity* (203-4):

"The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn."

When we refer to the metal "mercury", or to a "mercurial" temperament, we allude to the god Mercury, whose name was given to one of the planets and thence to the metal. The reference to temperament is due to the old astrology. The drug "morphia" derives its name from Morpheus, the son of Somnus, who was regarded as the god of sleep, and was represented with poppies in his hand.

When we use the word "panic" we are referring to the god Pan. Pan was the horned and hairy-legged god of the woods, and any sudden and universal affright was ascribed to him. Probably the fact that the name of the god also means "all" ($\pi\alpha\nu$) has had to do with this notion. The adjective derived from his name was attached to the word that means fear (*panikon deima*), to signify a general

fright. There is a legend in Herodotus to the effect that Pan helped the Athenians at Marathon by striking a contagious terror into the enemy. The word "protean" derives from Proteus, the sea god, who had the habit of eluding those who wished for an oracle from him by assuming different shapes, as of an animal, a whirlwind, a stream, or a flame.

We derive the word "tantalize" from the myth of Tantalus, whose punishment was to stand immersed in water up to the chin, with fruit hanging over his head, unable to satisfy either his thirst or his hunger. If you use a "vesta" to light your pipe the reference is to the goddess Vesta, within whose sanctuary a fire burned perpetually, tended by the Vestal virgins. If the fire ever went out, it portended disaster to Rome. When we call a fiery mountain a "volcano", and one of its devastating outbursts a "volcanic" eruption, we are using the name of Vulcan, the deity of fire and the armourer of the gods. His forges were believed to be under Etna, the volcano in Sicily.

A "hectoring" manner alludes to Hector, the bravest of the Trojan heroes, and a "stentorian" voice alludes to Stentor, one of the Greeks who fought against Troy, whose voice was louder than the voices of fifty men shouting together. If we "pander" to anyone the allusion is to Pandarus,

who was the go-between in the amours of his niece Chryseis and Troilus. There is a legendary source for the name of the hyacinth. The story is that Hyacinthus, the son of Amyclas, the king of Sparta, was killed by Zephyrus, and that the flower named after him, the "hyacinth", sprang from his blood, with the letters *ai, ai* on the petals. This is what Milton has in mind in *Lycidas* (106): "Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe". The field larkspur is also said to have on its petals the letters *ai*. The legend tells that when Ajax slew himself the *delphinium Ajacis* sprang from his blood, having these letters as a memorial of his name, *Aias*, which Sophocles evidently connects with *ai, ai* (alas! alas!) when he makes the hero ask, "Alas! who ever thought my name would match so well my evil plight?"¹

Some of our words derive from familiar facts in the life of ancient Greece. If we speak of a "laconic" utterance, or of a "Spartan" parent, we are alluding to the economy of speech and the rigidity of disci-

¹ *Ajax*, 340. Cf. Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, I. 35. Virgil, *Eclips.* III. 106. Ovid, *Metra*, x. 210-219.

A modern traveller says that after vainly searching the petals of our English hyacinths for the mystic letters, in his childhood, he was pleasantly surprised to find that the wild irises in Greece really have "delicately pencilled lines, partly parallel, partly intersecting, upon their petals", which do resemble the letters A I, A I. Lucas, *From Olympus to the Styx*, p. 75.

pline that was characteristic of the inhabitants of Laconia, or Sparta. When we use the word "meander" we are referring to the River Meander in Phrygia, which had a very tortuous course. When an orator's speech is described as a "philippic", it means that it is such a denunciation as Demosthenes used to hurl against Philip of Macedon. When a man is called an "epicure", the word refers to what was supposed, rather unfairly, to be the sensualist philosophy of Epicurus.

Several English words derive from the religious beliefs and practices of classical times. Thus "piety" and "pity", which are really the same word in origin, derive from the Latin *pietas*, the performance of duties toward the gods, which acquired a later sense of compassion. Our word "solemn" is from the Latin *sollennis*, which is a compound of *sollus* and *annus*, and means, first, yearly; then, relating to religious rites, as recurring regularly each year; then religious and "solemn". The word "fate" is from the Latin *fatum*, that which is said (from *fari*, to speak), and then an utterance of an oracle, especially with regard to future events, and so we have the sense of destiny. "Fanatic" is the Latin *fanaticus*, enthusiastic, inspired, frenzied. The word is from *fanum*, a temple.

From "omen", a good or bad sign, which we have borrowed unchanged from the Latin, we have

"ominous", meaning "significant" of evil; and probably "abominate", to detest, or "wish away as a bad omen". The Latin *auspex*, from *avis* (a bird, and *specere*, to observe), literally, a "bird-seer", is a soothsayer who divines good and bad omens from the way that birds sing or feed or fly, and so we have "auspicious" and "inauspicious", favourable and unfavourable. An *augur* was really the same as an *auspex* (the word *augur* is probably from *avis*, and a root *gar* as in *garrire*, to chatter, and meant one who divines from the cries of birds), and so we have "augury" in the sense of omen, and "inaugurate", which really means, first, to look for a good omen, and then, when one occurred, to consecrate a temple or install a priest, and so to induct into office, or begin an enterprise, in a formal and public manner. The Latin word *sors*, *sortis*, means a lot, and our word "sortilege" means divination by casting lots; the word "sorcery" also derives from *sors*. So does the word "sort"; from meaning a lot, and so an allotment, a share, it comes to mean a particular kind of anything.

There was a curious custom at several of the festivals in ancient Rome of hanging up balls, masks, and puppets to swing in the wind. It seems odd to us that this should have been a part of a religious ritual, but there are many parallels in many parts of the world. The name of the little swinging

figures was *oscilla*, and Virgil describes the custom of the farmers:

"Et te, Bacche, vocant per carmina laeta, tibique
Oscilla ex alta suspendunt mollia pinu."¹

"They hail thee, Bacchus, in their merry lines,
 And hang the swinging puppets on the pines."

From the name *oscilla* was derived the verb *oscillare*, which has passed into English as "oscillate".

The advent of Christianity gave a new sense to the Latin word *paganus*, a rustic, a countryman, from which we get "pagan" and "paynim", as well as "peasant", through the French *paysan*, from *pagensis*, which, like *paganus*, is from *pagus*, a district. The older etymologists explained the later meaning of the word "pagan" by pointing out that it was in the rural districts that the old religions held out longest against Christianity. This was quite a natural explanation, as the parallel English "heathen" is enough to suggest: it was the dwellers on the wild heaths and moors who retained their paganism after Christianity became dominant. (It is curious to remember, by the way, that "hoyden", a word that now means a boisterous girl, is probably of the same derivation as "heathen", and came to its present sense by meaning, first, a rustic, then a

¹ *Georgics*, II. 388-389.

clown, and then a romp.) The fifth-century writer, Orosius, explains the secondary sense of *paganī* thus: *qui ex locorum agresium compitis et pagis pagani vocantur*. But there is another fact to be remembered. It has been pointed out that *paganus* meant not only a rustic, but also, like our "civilian", one who was not a soldier, and the use of the phrase "soldiers of Christ" coloured the use of *paganus* in the sense of one who was not that.

This slang use of *paganus* by the Roman soldiers for a man who was a "civvy" may serve to remind us that we owe several words to the armies of Rome—the word "salary", for example, is from the Latin *salarium*, the pay of a soldier, which originally meant his allowance for salt (*sal*). The word "spoil" also comes to us from Roman warfare, for it is the Latin *spolium*, which first of all meant the arms of which you stripped your conquered foe. From that it naturally came to mean any kind of plunder, like the "spoils of war", and then as a verb, by another natural transition, "to spoil" got the meaning to ruin, and so to corrupt and to decay. Another word with a similar kind of origin is "subjugate"—the Latin *subjugare* (from *sub*, and *jugum*, a yoke). The vanquished enemies of Rome were made to pass under an erection made of two spears thrust into the ground, with a third fixed horizontally across these. This was "passing under the yoke".

It did not imply any reduction to slavery, such as the word rather suggests to us; in point of fact the rite does not appear to have been used if the vanquished were to be either enslaved or slain. It is rather based on the notion, found so widely in primitive magic, of ridding anyone of strange and dangerous qualities by making him pass through an aperture of some kind. The "rostrum" which supplies the place of the pulpit in some churches provides us with another interesting word of Roman origin. The word really means the beak of a bird or the snout of an animal. Then it was applied to the beaks of ships—the raised and decorated prows of ancient vessels. Then it was also appropriated to the platform in the forum at Rome from which speakers addressed the citizens, because the platform was adorned with the *rostra* of the ships captured by the Romans from the people of Antium, which had been placed there as trophies of the naval victory.

The modern world is different from the classical world in many more things than mechanism and religion. We know that in some directions our human susceptibilities have become much more delicate with the passage of the ages. The least refined people to-day would rebel at the stench and squalor of olden times. A modern crowd would unanimously swoon away at the sight of a Roman cruci-

fixion, or of some of the details of a mediaeval execution, such as quartering and disembowelling. It would seem as if our sensibilities have been developed in other ways also. In classical music, for example (though the subject is highly technical, and I do not profess to understand it), there seems to have been an almost entire lack of the subtleties of harmony, as the modern world understands it.

Much the same thing would appear to apply in the matter of colour. It looks as if the perceptions of the ancients were cruder in this respect, and as if modern man has developed a much more subtle feeling for the differences between the colours and shades of colour. In Greek the word *glaukos*, for example, apparently, covered all the hues that we mean by blue, grey, green, and silvery. At any rate, it is used of the sea, the eye, the olive, the vine, the willow, and sedge; as well as of the beryl and the topaz. So also the Latin word *purpureus* appears to have signified almost any hue from purple to violet and red. It is used by Horace of a rose, by Pliny of a violet, by Propertius of the rainbow, and by Virgil both of blood and of the sea. So Homer also uses *porphureos* of blood, of the sea, and of the rainbow. The Latin *purpura* (akin to the Greek *porphura*) is the source of our word "purple". It is difficult to resist the impression that some of these words in Greek and Latin meant something like

"gleaming or glowing with colour", rather than any definite hue. In the case of *glaukos*, that is confirmed by the fact that the root of the word means "to see".

It bears upon this late development of the sense of colour that words like *gris*, *blue*, *blond*, meaning properly grey, blue, and light brown, are used in the Middle Ages, as Darmesteter has remarked, in a way that seems to confound all these shades. It is perhaps also significant that the words for "blue", "brown", "green", "grey", "red", are common to all the Teutonic languages. So is "yellow", but it appears to be cognate with the Latin *helvus*, pale yellow, and ultimately with the Greek *chlōris*, pale green or greenish yellow, which apparently has a connection with *cholē*, bile. The words "orient" and "origin" both go back to the Latin *oriri*, to rise. The "Orient", or the East, is where the sun rises, and the "origin" of anything is the way it rises into existence. There was an earlier use of "orient" with reference to pearls. Chaucer writes in *The Legend of Good Women* (221-222):

"For of a perle fyne, *oriental*,
Hir whyte coroun was y-maked al."

So Oberon says in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (iv. i. 56-57):

"That same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and *orient* pearls."

The word was first used of pearls and gems as coming from the East, and then seems to have acquired a secondary sense which varies between genuine, precious, and dazzling. Milton uses the word in *Paradise Lost* (I. 545-546) in a way that can only mean the last:

"Ten thousand banners rise into the air
With *orient* colours waving."

A number of our familiar words are derived from Greek, and it happens that some of these have a picturesque history, and some a puzzling one. Thus our word "hypocrite" is the Greek *hypokrites* (from *hypokrinomai*, to answer), which means, first, one who answers, then an interpreter, then an actor on the stage, and finally a dissembler. The mention of the Greek stage may serve to remind us that the word "tragedy", *tragōidia*, originally means the "goat-song", from *tragos*, a he-goat, either because the oldest tragedies were exhibited when a goat was sacrificed, or because the actors were clad in goat skins, or because a goat was the prize. It came to mean any heroic play, or any grave poetry, as opposed to comedy (*kōmōidia*, from *kōmos*, the revel-song, or from *kōmē*, the village-song). Finally "tragedy" acquired the meaning of any melancholy event.

This reference to the goat might be extended

considerably. What is the verbal connection between *Capricorn*, the name of one of the signs of the zodiac, and a person of *capricious* temper? *Capricornus* is the horned goat (*caper*, a goat, and *cornu*, a horn) and the sign of the winter solstice. The Italian *capriccio* is a sudden motion like the skip of a goat; hence our "caprice" and "capricious", for a whimsical act and an uncertain temper. Then the word "caper" is short for *capriole*, from the Italian *capriola*, the leap of a young goat. The almost defunct vehicle called a "cab" derives its name by shortening from "cabriolet", which is a diminutive of *cabriole*, a French word derived from the Italian *capriola*; a *cabriole* was a two-wheeled carriage so lightly built that it leaped like a goat as it ran along!

The Greek *skandalon* means a snare laid for an enemy, and then a stumbling-block; hence our word "scandal". Similarly the Latin *offendere* means to strike against or run foul of something; hence our word "offend". A "solecism", which means an incorrect use of language, is from the Greek *soloikismos*. The word is said, rather doubtfully, to derive from the fact that the inhabitants of the city of Soloi in Cilicia spoke corrupt Greek. The word "sycophant" (*sukophantes*, an informer) was derived by some of the earlier etymologists from *sukon*, fig, and *phainein*, to show, and explained by the supposition that the export of figs

from Attica was forbidden, and that the name of "fig-shower" was given to spies and informers who betrayed those who did export figs. The comment on this in the early editions of Liddell and Scott's great Greek Lexicon was "The literal sense is not found in any ancient writer, and is perhaps a mere *figment*".

This gibe may serve to recall the extraordinary linguistic accident by which the Latin word for "fig" has become the French word for "liver". The latter is *foie*, as we may be reminded by the name of the delicacy known as *pâté de foie gras*, which is made of the livers of geese. *Foie* actually derives from *ficus*. The Romans were fond of liver stuffed with figs, which they called *jecur ficatum* (liver figged) or merely *ficatum*. So the latter word came to be used simply for liver, and the Romance languages all draw their word for liver from it, as with the Italian *fegato*. In the development of the French word, *ficatum* first had the accent displaced, then lost its last syllable and was reduced to *fica*, then lost its medial consonant, and then, by a phonetic change characteristic of the language, the vowels were modified, and so the word became *foie*.

That is an extreme example of changed meaning, but many of our English words derived from Greek and Latin have travelled far from their original

sense. It might well disgust a schoolboy to discover it, but it is nevertheless a fact that "school" comes from the Greek *scholē*, leisure. From that meaning it comes to signify "that in which leisure is employed", and so a discussion, a learned argument, a lecture, and then the place where such lectures are given, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles xix. 9 that St. Paul "disputed daily in the school (*ἐν τῇ σχολῇ*) of a certain Tyrannus", i.e. in his lecture-room. A "negotiation", like a "school", takes its departure from the notion of leisure. We get our word "negotiate" from the Latin *negotiari*, from *negotium*, oddly formed from the negative *nec*, and *otium*, ease, leisure, and so meaning non-leisure, or business. (Our word "disease", for sickness, derives in a similar way, through the Old French *desaise*, and means non-ease.) From the sense of being engaged in business, whether commercial or political, there develops the sense of "negotiating" a deal or "negotiating" a treaty. "Canvass", like "negotiate", has both a political and a commercial sense. The word really means to sift, to examine closely, and thence to search for, to solicit, and it is the same word as "canvas", a coarse cloth used for sifting, so called because it was made of hemp (the Greek *kannabis*, the Latin *cannabis*, hemp). The political meaning of "canvass" may remind us that the word "ambition" derives

from the Latin *ambitio*, which means "a going about" (*ambi*, about, and *eo, itum*, to go), because candidates for office in Rome went about canvassing for votes.

Since we have referred to politics, let us think of all we owe to the Greek and Latin words for city and citizen. Our words "police", "policy", "politic", "political", with all the other words developed from these, are from *polis*, the Greek word for city, and "civic", "civil", "civilian", "city", "citizen", and many other words formed from these, are from *civis*, *civitas*, the Latin words for citizen and city, while "urban", "urbane", and "suburb" are from *urbs*, another word for city. The development of meaning in these words is natural enough—the city itself; the government of the city and of the States; the persons engaged in that administration; and the fact that the people of a city were generally more advanced in culture, and more polite in behaviour, than the rustics of the countryside. The word "ostracism" has a political origin. In Athens and some other cities of Greece there was in classical times a practice of inflicting temporary banishment upon a person whose influence in the community was felt to be dangerous. The voting was done with tiles or potsherds on which was written the name of the person it was proposed to send into exile. Now the Greek word for anything made out of burnt clay, such as a pot

or a tile, is *ostrakon*. To "ostracize" anyone, therefore, is literally to "potsherd" him.

A number of interesting words derive from the roads and race-courses of ancient Rome. "Obvious" is what meets you in the way (*ob* and *via*), and so is plain to the eye, and "obviate" means to meet in the way and remove from the path. The word "trivial" derives in a similar way. The Latin *trivium* means a place where *three ways* met, and then *trivialis* means common, vulgar, because the cross-roads were naturally a place where a good deal of common intercourse and casual gossip took place. The Latin *carrus*, a cart, gives us "car" and "carry" (through the Old French *carier*, from the same root) and "carriage", used either of the act or cost of carrying anything, or of the way that a man "carries" himself, or of the wheeled vehicle in which things are carried, and "career" (the Old French *carrière*, a race-course, where cars or chariots raced, and hence a man's course of action in life). From *orbis*, a circle, the Romans derived another word *orbita*, which means, first, the track of a wheel, a rut, and then a path or course. It is from this word that we get "orbit", the path of the stars, and "ex-orbitant", which means going out of the regular track, and so "beyond the usual limits", "excessive". It is from *orbis* that we also get our "orb" and "orbed", meaning a circle, and circular, as when

a journalist writes of "the orb of day" for the sun, and when Shelley writes of "that orbèd maiden, With white fire laden, Whom mortals call the moon".

There is at least one word in English derived from a form that is practically the same in Greek and in Latin, but which has come to us by a devious route through Arabic and Italian. The "apricot" was called in Latin *praecoqua*¹ or *praetoccia*,² from being early ripe. (This word is the source of our "precocious".) In late Greek it became *praikokia*. Hence it became in Arabic (with the article) *al-barquq*, and thence in Italian *albricocco*, and in French *abricot*. The word thus strangely circumnavigated the Mediterranean. Then in earlier English it was "abricot", "abricoct", or "apricock"—the latter form in Shakespeare, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (III. i. 169), where Titania says: "Feed him with apricocks and dewberries"; and then finally "apricot".

We get several interesting words from ancient fabrics, furniture, and apparel. Thus the Greek *bombux* and the Latin *bombyx* mean a silkworm; the word evidently originates in an imitative sound like our "boom", to represent the humming of insects. The Latin word *bombycinus* meant silken, and *bombyx* was also used of fine threads of cotton. So we get our "bombazine", a fabric of silk and

¹ Martial, *Epig.* XIII. 46

² Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, xv. ii.

worsted, and also "bombast", which is cotton or any soft material used for stuffing garments. Hence "bombast" has come to mean inflated language; a "bombastic" utterance is literally a "stuffed-out" utterance. A "canopy" is the Greek *kōnōpeion*, a bed with mosquito curtains, from *kōnōps*, a gnat. It was despised by the Romans as an effeminate luxury. Horace wrote *Interque signa turpe militaria Sol adspicit conopium*,¹ "Among the military standards, O shame! the sun beholds a canopy". From the original meaning of a curtained bed the word canopy has come to mean almost any awning over a bed or a throne. We owe several of our words and usages of words to the Roman *pallium*. To "palliate" anything is to disguise it, or cover it with a cloak (from *pallium*, cloak, and then *palliare*). A funeral "pall" and the "pallium" of a Roman Catholic Archbishop derive in the same way; one is a cloak for the coffin and the other was originally a cloak for the prelate.

There are some interesting examples where we have similar phrases in Greek and Latin and English, because there was a similar fancy in the minds of early men in different lands. Thus one would hardly suspect from the look of the words that the stately "galaxy" and the familiar "lettuce" have ultimately the same source. But they have, for the Greek

¹ *Epistles*, ix. 16.

gala means milk, and the Greeks spoke of the *galaxias*, exactly as the Romans did of the *via lactea*, and as we do of "the Milky Way". Chaucer writes, in *The House of Fame* (935-939):

"Now, quod he tho, cast up thyn yē,
See yonder, lo the Galaxyē,
Which men clepeth the Milky Wey,
For hit is whyt."

Now *gala*, *galaktos*, is ultimately the same word as the Latin *lac*, *lactis*. Because of the milky sap which it exudes, the Romans called the plant which is so familiar in salads *lactuca*. This became in French *laitue*, and in English (through a plural of the older French form) "letus", and then "lettuce".

Let us not forget that we owe to the Greek and Latin most of our words relating to books, though "book" itself is a native word. The word "bible" means book, and was once used in that general sense. Chaucer says, in *The House of Fame* (1334), that if all the arms in the tournaments were to be described:

"Men mighte make of hem a *bible*
Twenty foot thikke, as I trowe."

The word is from the late Latin *biblia*, which is from the Greek plural *ta biblia*, the books—compare "the Scriptures" (from the Latin *scriptura*, writing). The singular form of the word, *biblion*, is a diminu-

tive of *biblos*, the inner rind of the papyrus. This Egyptian reed has given us our word "paper"; and also "taper", which has somehow suffered a change in the initial consonant. Since some such material as paper was used for the wick of a candle, the word "taper", from meaning "wick", came to mean "candle", and then was used of anything that "tapers" to a point, as a candle does. We derive "vellum", which is a kind of parchment made of the skins of calves (as we also derive "veal"), from an old form of the French *veau*, calf. The word "book" is from the Anglo-Saxon *bōk*, beech, and the word "library" for a collection of books is from *liber*, book, a word which originally meant the inner rind of the bark, because the inside of bark, and especially beech bark, was used to write upon in early times. A "volume" is a roll, from the Latin *volumen*, anything that is folded up, or rolled together, as writings on parchment and papyrus were. A "pamphlet" possibly derives its name from Pamphylla, a Greek lady of the first century who wrote a number of historical epitomes in booklets. A "romance" gets its name ultimately from the Eternal City. In the early Middle Ages to write or speak *romanz* (*Romanice*, from *Romanus*, *Romanicus*, Roman) meant to use the vernacular as against the literary Latin, and a *roman* meant first of all a book written in the Romance language, that is, in

French. Many of these were *chansons de geste*, or stories of great deeds. Then from meaning a story of adventure, the word came to signify simply a story, a work of fiction, and so we speak of a "romance", and also of the "romantic" as opposed to the "classical" in literature.

Many of the words hitherto dealt with have some specially interesting quality, by way of a legendary origin or a picturesque history. But it must not be forgotten that we owe a multitude of ordinary words to the Latin element in English. It has been reckoned that one hundred and fifty Greek and Latin roots have given us about thirteen thousand words in English, and one can well believe it. Take as an example the one Latin word *trahere*, *tractus*, to draw, and think of the words we derive from it in English, in each of which the original sense of the Latin word may still be discovered. A "tractate" or a "tract" is a book in which a subject is *drawn* out and examined, and a "tract" of land is the range to which the ground is *drawn* out and extends. A "tractable" character is one easily *drawn* along in the desired direction. A "tractile" material is one that can be *drawn* out into lengths. A "traction" engine or a motor "tractor" *draws* a load along the highway. To "attract" is to *draw to*; to "contract" is to *draw together*, and in the sense of a business contract the word means that the various points

on which the parties are agreed are *drawn together* and stated in a legal document; to "detract" is to *draw from* the reputation of anyone or anything; to "subtract" is to *draw from under*, as you take a number from under a large number; to "extract" is to *draw out* (whether it be a tooth or a confession or an essence!); to "abstract" is to *draw away* and remove; to "retract" is to *draw back*, either in the literal sense, or in the sense of withdrawing a statement; to "distract" is to *draw asunder*, and our attention may be either drawn asunder in some particular, so that we are "distracted" from a specific object, or drawn asunder in so many directions at once that we become "distracted", "dis-traught", or mad.

Then we get "trace" from the Latin *tractus* by way of the French, and the "trace" of anything is the mark which it leaves *drawn* after it, and "traces" are the straps by which a horse *draws* a vehicle. "Tracery" is a mass of lines *drawn* out in stone or in other material, and if we use a French word, and speak of a "trait" in anyone's personality, it means some touch in the *drawing* of his character. For the same Latin root appears in French as *traiter* and in English as "treat" (from *tractare*, to draw, then to handle, or to manage), and so we "treat", or *handle*, anybody well or ill; or "treat" them to, or *hand* them, a drink; or if we are in the

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medical profession, we "treat" or *handle* them for a disease; or we "treat" or *handle* a subject in writing and produce a "treatise", or *handling* of it, in which our "treatment", or the way we *handle* the theme, may be better or worse; or it may be that after "treating" of or *handling* some matters in dispute, we make a "treaty" with another nation.

III

THE MIDDLE AGES

A GREAT many interesting words have come to us from the religious and ecclesiastical vocabulary of the Middle Ages. Thus "bead" originally meant "prayer" (from the Anglo-Saxon *biddan*, request), and the sense is retained in "beadsman", one who lived in an almshouse and was bound to pray daily for the founders. Chaucer uses *bid* for pray, as in *Troilus and Criseyde* (III. 342-343):

"And *bid* for me, sin thou art now in blisse,
That God me sende deeth or some lisse."

Then, from the use of a number of little balls, pierced and strung together, and handled in counting your prayers, the word came to mean what we do when we speak of a string of "beads". Chaucer, again, in describing the Prioress (*Prologue*, 157-160), says:

"Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of *bedes*, gauded al with grene
And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene."

The early sense is found in Shakespeare, as, for example, *King Richard the Second* (III. 3, 147-150):

"I'll give my jewels for a set of *beads*,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown."

The word "rosary", in use among Catholics for a string of beads used in keeping count of their prayers, derives from *rosarium*, a garden of roses, first as a title of a book of devotion, then for a series of prayers, and then for the beads used in counting them.

Most of the names of ecclesiastical officers and ecclesiastical furniture naturally derive from Latin, or from Greek through Latin, and came into English by that route during the Middle Ages. Thus "cleric", which is the same as "clerk", comes from the Anglo-Saxon *clerc*, a priest, which is from the Latin *cleritus*, which again is ultimately from the Greek *klēros*, a lot, because the Church was the lot or inheritance of the Lord (1 Peter v. 3), but probably the choice of Matthias by lot (Acts i. 26) has had some influence upon the word. The modern use of the word "clerk" derives from the fact that in the Middle Ages it was practically only the clergy who were able to read and write, and so to be employed as scribes. The word "shrive", by the way, is from the Latin *scribere*, to write, and the sense of "absolve" comes by way of a penance being *prescribed*. The "laity" are the people, the Greek *laos*, and because the laity were uneducated the

word "lewd", from the Anglo-Saxon *lewed*, lay, has come to mean, first, untaught and ignorant, and then vicious and debauched. A "curate" has the "cure" of souls (Latin, *cura*, carefulness, concern, solicitude). A physician has a similar careful charge of our bodies, and sometimes by that solicitude he effects a "cure" of our diseases.

A "cathedral" is so called from the *kathedra*, or chair of the bishop, for it was the chief church of his diocese, and he was enthroned there. Our other English name "minster" derives from *monasterium*, and some of the English cathedrals, like Durham, were originally abbey churches. "Nun" is from *nonna*, the feminine form of *nonnus*, which was used for a monk. Both are really affectionate names for old folk (and have passed into Italian as *nonna* and *nonno*, with the meaning grandmother and grandfather). It is odd that "nun" should have been retained for the cloistered woman, while "monk", from *monachus*, meaning solitary (the Greek *monachos*, from *monos*, alone), has established itself as the name of the male recluse. The "dean" of a cathedral derives his name from *decanus*, originally the leader of a *decania*, or body of ten Roman soldiers. Then the word got the more general meaning of an overseer of a small number of inferiors. It was used of the overseer of the slaves in a household, and later, in Constantinople, of a police official. In

monasteries in the days of St. Augustine, a *decanus* had authority over ten novices. To-day the word is used for the principal officer of a cathedral, "the Dean of St. Paul's", or in some cases of the head of a college in a university, "the Dean of King's College", and of a subordinate officer in a diocese, "the Rural Dean of Warwick".

Our word "verge" is through the French from the Latin *virga*, a rod. A "verger" is the bearer of a wand of office. The use of the word "verge" with the meaning of edge (as in a phrase like "on the verge of tears") is apparently due to the expression "within the verge", in the sense of "within the range of authority of an officer who bore a verge". From "within the verge" came "on the verge", for on the brink. "Virgin" derives from a word closely akin, for *virgo* and *virga* are both related to *virere*, to be green, hence, to be in the freshness of youth, like a green shoot. A "sexton" is properly a "sacristan" (*sacristanus*, from *sacer*, sacred) because he had charge of the sacred vessels. The "altar" is originally that which is erected in the high place (*altus*) of the church.

What link is there between a "salver" and a "crecence-table"? "Salver" is from the Spanish *salvar*, to save, and the name derives from the mediaeval practice of having food and drink tasted by a servant before being served, as a precaution

against poison. Similarly, a "credence-table" in a church derives its name, through the French *crédence*, from *credere*, to believe. It is the small table beside the altar on which the elements were placed before consecration. The name comes from the same practice, and refers to the confidence inspired by the test. There is, or was, an official at the Papal Court called the *praeguste*, because it was his duty to taste the elements, as a safeguard against poison, before the Pope partook of them. Dreadful as it is to remember, a poisoned Host was not unknown in mediaeval Italy, as a method of making away with an enemy. *Credenza* has come to mean "sideboard" and *credenziere* "butler" in modern Italian.

The word "dirge" derives from the first word spoken by the priest at the beginning of the first nocturn in the Office for the Dead, *Dirige, Domine Deus meus, in conspectu tuo viam meam*, "Make my way straight before Thy face, O Lord my God!" (The passage is adapted from Psalm v. 8 in the Vulgate.) A "catafalque" was sometimes used at funerals. The word is really the same as the much less dignified word "scaffold". The late Latin *catafalcum*, a word of very doubtful origin, became *eschadafaut*, *eschafaut*, *eschafaud*, *échafaud*. The earlier meaning was a platform erected for the purpose of witnessing tournaments, and so forth.

There are the two forms and the two meanings in modern French, *catafalque* and *échafaud*, as in English, "catafalque" and "scaffold", the one a structure representing a tomb, and the other a platform used for an execution, or in the erection of a building. The Latin *hirpex*, *hirpicis*, means a large rake or harrow. The French *herse*, derived from this, meant a harrow, and also a portcullis or a caltrop; both spiked like a harrow. Then the word "herse" came to mean in English a framework with spikes to hold candles over a bier. Then it was extended to the bier itself, and to the tomb. So in Ben Jonson's *Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke*:

"Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,"

and in Milton's *Lycidas* (151):

"To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies."

Our word "rehearse" has the same source. It is from the Old French *rehercier*, to harrow again, and so to go over a second time, to repeat.

The "church", or, in the northern form of the word, the "kirk", is the Greek *kuriakon* (from *kurios*, Lord), "that which belongs to the Lord", and so "the Lord's house". But when we speak of a "chapel" the word is related to the word "cape". *Capella* in Low Latin means a little cape or cope,

and one explanation is that a small cope was kept in the palace of the Kings of France on which to administer oaths, and that presently the sanctuary where it was kept was called the *capella*, *chapelle*, or "chapel". Another explanation is that the little cloak or cape of St. Martin of Tours was greatly venerated after his death, and that the place where it was kept came to be called the *capella*, or "chapel". In any case there is no doubt that the word chapel does derive from *capella*, a cloak or cape. The word "chaplain" means properly one who is in charge of a chapel. Two other words related to "cape" are "caparison", from the Spanish *caparazon*, and "Capuchin", from the Italian *capuccio*, both ultimately from the late Latin *cpa*, a cape—the "caparison" of a horse was at first a cape spread over the saddle, and the "Capuchin" friar wore a cape to his gown which could be thrown over the head as a hood. The word "chaperon" derives in a similar way from the French *chaperon*, hood, probably by way of the metaphorical sense of protecting a lady as if by screening her with a hooded cloak. It may be added that "escape", the Old French *escaper*, is from *ex* and *cappa*, cloak, and has the vivid sense of getting away at the cost of leaving one's garment in the grasp of the pursuing enemy.

The names of the different parts of a church are

rather interesting. The "aisles" are wings (*ala*), and the "nave" is so called from the resemblance of the roof to the inverted timbers of a ship (*nef, navis*). The word "chancel" has a number of curious connections. It is odd that the name of a familiar crustacean should have given us English words in wide use which have the most diverse meanings in astronomical, commercial, ecclesiastical, legal, medical, and political references. The Latin word for "crab" is *cancer*, and Cancer is the name of one of the signs of the zodiac. A dread disease is called "cancer" (an older form of the English word is "canker") because the sores it made on the flesh were supposed to have some resemblance to the claws of a crab. The latticed railings of the law courts in the days of the later Empire were called *cancelli*, or crab-like. The usher who was stationed by them was called the *cancellarius*. In course of time he became a much more important officer and developed into a kind of secretary and statesman. Hence the "Chancellors" and "chancelleries" of the European nations. The sanctuary of a church was separated from the nave by lattice-work (*cancelli*); hence it was called the "chancel". When an account or an agreement was nullified criss-cross lines were drawn across it, and so we "cancel" a document.

The word "gossip" is from the earlier *godsibb*,

which means sib (or akin) in God. In the Scottish dialect "sib" has survived, and in *Redgauntlet*, when Alan Fairford says, "She is the Laird's daughter?" his partner at the dance replies, "His daughter, man? Na, Na, only his niece—and sib aneugh to him, I think", i.e. quite nearly enough related to him.

Now those who acted as sponsors at a child's baptism were called *godsibbes*, for they were regarded as having contracted a spiritual affinity, and in consequence a child's godfathers and godmothers were debarred from marrying each other by the rule of the mediaeval Church. So Chaucer writes in *The Parson's Tale*: "And certes, parentele is in two maneres, outhier goostly or fleshly; goostly as for to delen with hise *godsibbes*. For right so as he that engendreth a child is his fleshly fader, right so is his godfader his fader espirituel. For which a womman may in no lasse sinne assemblen with hir *godsib* than with hir owene fleshly brother".¹ From meaning godparent, "gossip" came to mean a crony, an old friend with whom one talks easily, or "gossips". The French used *compère* and *commère* (from the *comptater*, *commater*, of Church Latin)

¹ Chaucer also uses the word in what is evidently the modern sense, and in what is nearer the modern form, when he makes the Wife of Bath say: "And if I have a *gossip* or a freend, Withouten gilt thou chidest as a feend". (*Prologue*, 243-244.)

in the sense of godfather and godmother, and both words have developed a like meaning of crony or gossip. *Commère* has given "cummer" to the Scottish dialect. "Ane suldna speak ill o' the dead", says Ailison Breck in *The Antiquary*, "mair by token, o' ane's cummer and neighbour". We also have "compeer", in the sense of an associate, from the Latin *compar*, equal, but the word has certainly been influenced by *compère*.

The Latin word for cross (*crux, crucis*) has entered directly or indirectly into many English words. The "crux" of the matter, or the "crucial" point in an argument, is said to be so called from marking a critical point in a manuscript with a cross. The "crozier" carried by a bishop is marked with a cross, the Old French *croce*, though there has been some confusion between the word for cross and a root (like the Welsh *crwg*) that means a hook, or a crook, in several of these words. The "crutch" used by the lame is a staff with a *cross* piece at the top, and the "Crutched Friars" wore a *cross* on their gowns. Those amazing expeditions we call the "Crusades" derived their name from the French *croisade*, because those who went to rescue the Holy Land wore a cross on their garments. The French word derives from the Provençal, *crozada*, which is from *croz*, a cross. We owe several interesting words to the Crusades, by the

way. "Termagant" was the name of a supposed idol that the Saracens were believed to worship; it is found in Old French as *tervagant*. It seems to have developed the general sense of a raging fury on the mediaeval stage, and has finally come to mean a brawling woman. The game of "hazard" is supposed to derive its name from Asart, a fortress in Palestine, during the siege of which in the Crusades the game is said to have been invented. William of Tyre is the authority for this, and as he was a native of Palestine, and began to write his history about 1182, there seems to be good warrant for accepting his account. "Hazard", in the sense of danger, derives from the title of the game. The word "assassin" also belongs to this category. It occurs in Joinville, the French chronicler of the Crusade of St. Louis, in the form *assacis*, and in the Latin of the time as *hassassin*. It is the name of a sect of Mohammedan fanatics in Palestine in the thirteenth century, the Haschischin, or drinkers of hashish, a drug which is got from the leaves of hemp. The famous Sheik who was known as the Old Man of the Mountain roused his followers to frenzy by a decoction of this drug, and then sent them to stab his enemies, particularly the leading Crusaders. By the fifteenth century the word had lost its historic associations, and gained the general sense of "murderer". Another word we

owe to the contact of Christianity with Islam is "renegade". When a Christian became a captive of the Moors and turned Mohammedan to curry favour with his captors, the Spaniards called him a *renegado*—the root of the word is the Latin *negare*, *negatum*, to deny, because he had denied his faith. From this we get our word "renegade", for an apostate to principle or party, and also, by a natural corruption, "runagate", which has got the meaning of vagabond. This is one example among many of the way that a foreign word is first adopted into the language, and then assimilated in form to other words already existing in the language—in this case the familiar English words "run" and "agate". The latter still exists in dialect.

Then the practice of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages has given us a number of words of a particularly interesting character. The word "canter" for an easy gallop is derived from Canterbury. For centuries a host of pilgrims rode to the shrine of St. Thomas à Becket there. As late as the eighteenth century we find the phrase "on the Canterbury" for "on the trot", and "canter" is merely an abbreviation of that. The "palmer" (who has given us the common surname "Palmer") was a pilgrim who returned home with a palm-branch from the Holy Land. The word "roam" is derived from the

"romer", or pilgrim to Rome.¹ In *Piers the Plowman* (iv. 120 and 128) Langland has "religious romares" and "Rome-renneres" in the sense of pilgrims. Similarly "saunter" was once believed to derive from a pilgrim who went to the Holy Land (*sainte terre*), but this must now be given up. The word "saunter" does not appear to have come into the language in the sense of walking easily until the seventeenth century. One conjecture is that it may come, through an Old French form *sauntrer*, from a late Latin *exadventuraer*, to venture out. The late appearance of the word makes it rather difficult to accept this, though the suggested line of derivation is supported by the fact that Chaucer uses "misaunter" for misadventure in *Troilus and Criseyde* (i. 766): "For whom that thee al this misaunter ayleth?" Many pilgrims begged their food as they went along, and in the later Middle Ages there were great orders of Mendicant Friars. Our word "beggar" derives from, or rather is a form of, the word Beghard. The Beghards or Beguines were a lay brotherhood, supposed to be founded by Lambert Bègue, a priest who lived in Liège about 1180. The word is used in two passages of *The Romaunt of the Rose* (7256-7258 and 7282-7285)

¹ There are words in other languages with a similar derivation, e.g. the Low Latin *romerus*, the Old French *romieu*, and the Spanish *romero*.

to translate the *Beguin* of the French text, but it evidently refers to Franciscans:

“But Beggars with these hodes wyde,
With sleigh and pale faces lene,
And greye clothes not ful clene,”

and:

“Who may that Begger wel excuse?
That papelard, that him yieldeth so
And wol to worldy ese go
And seith that he the world hath left.”

Our word “bigot” is from the same source—the name which appears in a multitude of forms as Beghardi, Beguini, Bighini, Bizocchi, Bighiotti, and so forth.

The saints of the Church, and especially some of the mediaeval saints, have left many traces in our vocabulary. Thus St. Bride—the name is a short form of St. Bridget—has given us “Bridewell”. There was a St. Bride’s Well in London, and a royal residence near it. This was first converted into a hospital, and later, in the sixteenth century, into a house of correction: hence “Bridewell” was constantly used, down to the early nineteenth century at least, in that general sense. Similarly “Bedlam” was used down to the eighteenth century for a madhouse, and we still use it of any noisy and frantic disorder. The word derives from St. Mary

of Bethlehem, whose convent was assigned, at the Reformation, for the reception of lunatics. So "Bedlam", contracted from "Bethlehem" Hospital, became a generic name, first for an insane asylum, and then for a frenzied noise. The word "tawdry" derives from St. Ethelreda, who was commonly known as St. Audrey. She was the patron saint of Ely. The legend is that she died of a disease in the throat which she regarded as a judgment upon her because of her fondness for necklaces in her youthful and worldly days. At the yearly pilgrimage to her shrine it was customary for the pilgrims to buy necklets of lace or silk. These were called "St. Audrey's chains". Mopsa says to the clown in *The Winter's Tale* (iv. 4. 253), "Come, you promised me a tawdry-lace", meaning a necklace. As these were generally low in price and poor in quality "tawdry" has come to be applied to any cheap and gaudy finery.

The legend of St. Gervasius narrates that he was scourged to death at Milan, in very early times, as a Christian confessor. A whip was therefore the saint's emblem. It is probable that this led to Jarvis, which is a form of Gervase, becoming a familiar name for a coachman, whence our "jarvey". A hackney-coach in France used to be called a *fiacre*. This name also derives from a saint. The first carriages which plied for hire in Paris appeared in

the seventeenth century, and were stationed at the Hôtel de Saint Fiacre in the Rue Saint Antoine. They seem to have been used at first to carry pilgrims to the shrine of St. Fiacre at Meaux. The saint was an Irishman whose name was properly Fiachra. He lived at Meaux as a hermit, and died there in the seventh century. His cult was popular in the north of France, and his tomb was famous for miraculous cures. St. Mary Magdalene was so called from Magdala, a town on the lake of Galilee. The earlier English form "Maudeleyne" has given us the word "maudlin", which may mean either sloppily sentimental, or in the condition of partial drunkenness which is often marked by that state of mind. It derives by way of the thought of a penitent, who is weeping bitterly, and in such distress as to be incoherent.

Another mediaeval saint has given us a word which is employed with a double reference to the pantomime and to wearing apparel. It is curious to remember that when an American refers to his "pants", he is using a word that goes back, by way of one of the traditional characters of the Italian comedy, to Venice and the mediaeval costume of the Venetians, and finally to a legendary martyr of the Church who is supposed to have lived in the fourth century. The legend is that St. Pantaleone was martyred in the persecution under Diocletian,

about the year 305. His feast-day is kept on July 27th.

He was supposed to have been a native of Nicomedia. The legend tells us that his persecutors tried to burn him, but the torches went out. Then they sought to drown him, but the stone which they had fastened to his body floated and bore him up. Then they flung him to the wild beasts, but the beasts fawned upon him. Then they attempted to behead him, but the sword bent, and finally he was slain only when he himself desired to die. His name as it stands means "All-Lion" (*panta* and *leōn*), but the legend says that it was really Pantaleemon (*panta* and *eleēmōn*), "All-Compassionate", because he prayed for mercy on his persecutors. Relics of him are (or were) preserved at Paris and at Lyons, and there used to be a phial of his blood at Constantinople, which turned liquid on the day of his martyrdom (like that of St. Januarius at Naples, and many other examples of this particularly crude superstition).

Now St. Pantaleone was famous in Venice. The church dedicated to him, near the Campo Santa Margherita, is the parish church of a densely populated neighbourhood, and he has always been a favourite saint in the city. The Italians still call any Venetian peculiarity a *pantalonata*. In the stock Italian comedy of the Middle Ages, one of

the characters was a Venetian buffoon, the father of a family, whose name was Pantalone, and he wore the tight-fitting trousers which the Venetians affected. Hence "pantaloons" became a name for a clown, and "pantaloons" became the name for these trousers, and "pants" is an abbreviation of it.

The "samphire" which few people have seen—I once saw some for sale in the market-place at Boston, under the shadow of St. Botolph's Church—though we are all familiar with the name of it, from the passage in *King Lear* (iv. 6. 14-15), where Edgar, looking down over the cliff of Dover, says:

"half-way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!"

owes its name to St. Peter. It used to be called *herbe de Saint Pierre* in French, and *herba di San Pietro* in Italian. The usual French name to-day is *passe-pierre* or *perce-pierre*. The association with St. Peter is doubtless due to the Apostle's connection with the sea. St. Philibert, who was a martyr in Spain, according to the Breviary, has given his name to a nut, the "filbert", probably because it would be ripe about August 22nd, the day on which St. Philibert was commemorated. Similarly the Germans call the filbert "Lambertnuss", and St. Lambert's Day is September 17th. So the German name for the red currant, "Johannisbeere", plainly

comes from the fact that the fruit is ready about St. John the Baptist's day, which is June 24th.

We owe several interesting words to the scholastic tradition of the Middle Ages. Thus the word "bachelor", which we use in two senses, of a university graduate and of an unmarried man, has come to us from the mediaeval universities. Sometimes the source of the word is said to be unknown, and sometimes it is suggested that it comes from a Celtic root *bach*, little, as in the Welsh *bachgen*, and *bachgenes*, boy and girl. But *baccalaria* was certainly used in mediaeval Latin for a grazing farm—it seems to derive from *bacca*, for *vacca*, a cow, and *baccarius* and *baccalaria* were used, apparently, of young farm-servants. The word was applied later on to a lower vassal, and then to a young man who aspired to knighthood. Then it was used of a young man as unmarried, and of a young student at one of the universities, and *bachelier*, as the word had then become, was latinized afresh into *baccalaureus*, as if it derived from *bacca*, berry, and *laureus*, laurel, and referred to the laurel of Apollo. Then Bachelor became the title of the lowest degree in each faculty—Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Divinity, and so on. The Bachelor of Divinity in some of the mediaeval universities was called a *cursor* (as if he had to run a course, *currere, cursum*), because he had to give a course of

lectures for a year on one book of the Old Testament and one book of the New Testament. The lectures were often of little value, and were frequently given by permission in the vacation! This seems to be the origin of our word "cursory".

Peter Lombard wrote a famous theological work known as the "Sentences", because it consisted of quotations from the Fathers, with a commentary. This was repeatedly expounded by the later Schoolmen. It was the repute of this work that has given us the word "sententious", in the sense of short and wise, though the word has since acquired rather a worse meaning, and sometimes suggests a mere affectation of wise brevity. Another of the great theologians of the Middle Ages was John Duns Scotus, so called because his birthplace was either Duns in Scotland, Dunston in England, or Down in Ireland. The latter is the most likely, and the fact that John was called "the Scot" does not in any way contradict it, since Ireland was then known as *Scotia major*. We owe our word "dunce" to Duns Scotus. When the scholastic theology fell into disfavour at the time of the Renaissance it was regarded as a proof of stupidity to be a student of Duns Scotus, and Tyndal wrote of "Dunce's disciples, the children of darkness". So, by the irony of history, the name of the man who was called "the Subtle Doctor" has become a byword for ignorance.

Then we owe some interesting words to the feudalism of the Middle Ages. Thus "homage" is the service rendered to a king or a lord by one who is his man (*homme*), and "dominion" has come to us by way of feudal usage from the Latin *dominium*, lordship, from *dominus*, lord; "dungeon" derives from the same source through the French *donjon*. The change of meaning is curious. In mediaeval Latin *domnionem* meant a dominating tower. The vaults beneath the main tower of a castle were used as prisons; hence the modern meaning of "dungeon".

Several words originally relating to the horse, some of which have developed quite a different significance in later days, have come down to us from mediaeval times. The word "marshal" is the Old High German *marahscall*, horse-servant (in which the first part is cognate with our "mare"), through the French *maréchal*. From meaning groom the word has come to signify officers such as a marshal of the Court and a Field Marshal. So also "constable" derives from the mediaeval *comes stabulus*, i.e. *comes stabuli*, count of the stable, in the days of the Merovingian kings. It is odd to remember that "marshal", which once meant something like hostler, has come to be the title of high officials in the Court and the Army, and that "constable", once a title of high dignity when a *Connétable de*

France was a powerful nobleman, is now generally used of a policeman. The English word must have got something like the modern meaning by the time of Langland, for in *Piers the Plowman* (iv. 84-85) the king swears:

"That wronge for his werkis · sholde wo tholye,
And comaunded a *constable* · to casten hym in yrens."

A "henchman" has come to mean a loyal follower, but it is really the Middle English *henxtman*, or groom, from the Anglo-Saxon *hengest*, horse. The name of the Saxon conqueror of Kent, Hengist, means horse, and a horse is said to have been the device on the banners of the Saxons. There are several "White Horses" in England, cut in the turf on chalky hills, which are believed to be memorials of Saxon victories. The word "esquire", from the Old French *escuyer* (the Old French *escu*, earlier *escut*, from the Latin *scutum*, means a shield), is the name of the knight's shield-bearer. Then the Old French *escurie* meant an esquire's place or estate, and also the stable of the knight or noble, since it was an esquire's duty to look after his master's horses. Then the term *escuyer d'escuyrie*, esquire of the stable, gave us the word "equerry".

There are many important and interesting words in English derived from the old notions of astronomy and astrology prevalent in the Middle Ages, and

some of these connect with another group of words relating to temper and temperament. The ancient belief was that all things in the lower world were composed of the four elements, earth, air, fire, and water. Aristotle thought that the heavens were of a subtler substance, which he called *aithēr*, our word "ether", but later philosophers gave it the name of *πεμπτὴ οὐσία*, fifth being. This was called by Cicero *quinta natura*, fifth nature, but in later Latin it became *quinta essentia*, fifth essence. This is the source of our word "quintessence". Now many words referring to temperament derive from such notions of ancient science. The word "temperament" itself really means "mixture", or the way that the various elements are "tempered" or mixed together, the sense of the word "temper" in *Cymbeline* (v. 5. 249-250), where Cornelius says:

"The queen, sir, very oft importuned me
To temper poisons for her."

"Good temper" and "bad temper" really are "a good mixture" and "a bad mixture". The four elements in the world—air, which is warm and moist; water, which is cold and moist; fire, which is hot and dry; and earth, which is cold and dry—made up the body, according to the old physiologists, under the names of blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile, and as any one of them was

predominant, a man's temperament was "sanguine" (*sanguis*, blood), "phlegmatic", "choleric" (*cholē*, bile), or "melancholy" (*melan cholē*, black bile). Diseases also were due to some maladmixture of these elements; we still speak of "distemper" as a disease of dogs (and also of "distemper" as a kind of paint, where the name comes from the notion of mixing or tempering colours). Chaucer says of his *Doctour of Phisik* (*Prologue*, 419-421) that he:

"knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moyste, or drye,
And where engendered, and of what humour."

As the last word is sufficient to remind us, these elements in the body were called "humours", (Latin *humor*, liquid), and it was thought that if they were rightly mixed a man was normal, but if one of them was in excess the man became odd, unbalanced, fanciful, or "humorous". That was the early sense of the word, as where Shakespeare writes in *As You Like It* (1. 2. 274-278):

"Albeit you have deserved
High commendation, true applause and love,
Yet such is now the duke's condition
That he misconstrues all that you have done.
The duke is *humorous*."

So also in later days Clarendon describes seafaring men as "a humorous and fantastic people". From meaning fantastic, whimsical, or odd, the word "humorous" has developed its modern sense of

"comical". "Idiosyncrasy" (the Greek *idiosunkrasia*, the word is used by Galen) is from *idios*, one's own, and *sunkrasis*, mixture, and belongs to the same range of words. Anything special in your "temperament", the particular way that the elements are tempered or mixed in you, is a personal peculiarity. "Complexion" now refers to the skin of the face, but it derives from *complectere*, to plait together, and it used to mean much the same as "temperament", or the way that the elements were mixed in anyone's disposition, as in Shakespeare, where Hamlet says (I. 4. 23-26):

"So oft it chances in particular men
By the o'ergrowth of some *complexion*,
Shall in the general censure take corruption
From that particular fault."

"Plight" belongs to this class of words. It is a variant of "plait", and Shakespeare uses the word in that sense in *King Lear* (I. I. 283), where Cordelia says:

"Time shall unfold what *plighted* cunning hides,"
as Milton does in *Comus* (229-301):

"Creatures of the element
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' th' *plighted* clouds."

From the notion of plaiting together, or interweaving, there came the meaning of "complexion", in the old sense of temperament, or the way that the elements were mingled. Then from the sense of a

man's condition in regard to temperament (we still speak of a man as "ill-conditioned") there came the sense of a man's condition in respect of his circumstances—the "plight" in which he finds himself, now always used with some reference to its being unpleasant or dangerous.

The classical mythology has also given us some words referring to temperament, by way of its connection with the mediaeval astrology. We speak of a man who is jolly, or gloomy, or changeable, or warlike, as "jovial", or "saturnine", or "mercurial", or "martial", where the references to Jove, Saturn, Mercury, and Mars are obvious. A man was thought to be born and to live under the influence of the planets, Jupiter, or Saturn, or Mercury (we still use "mercury" as the name of the most unstable of all the metals), or Mars, with the result that he was genial, or sad, or fickle, or warlike in his temperament. The word "sphere" (Greek *sphaira*, Latin *sphaera*, a ball, a globe) is also used first of all with an astronomical reference, as in Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*:

"Ring out, ye crystal *spheres*!
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so."

Then from meaning a planet, and a planetary orbit, it comes to mean the general course of a man's

existence, the "sphere" in which his life moves, and finally any sort of range, a "sphere of activity", and so on. Similarly, "aspect" meant the appearance of a planet which changed with its changing position amid the stars. So in Shakespeare, where Ulysses says in *Troilus and Cressida* (I. 3. 92), speaking of the sun:

"Whose medicinal eye
Corrects the ill *aspects* of planets evil."

The use of the word has been extended until it means the look of anything. The word "climate" originally meant region, and the poets still speak of different "climes" in the sense of different lands. The old geographers divided the space between the equator and the pole into thirty parts called inclinations or "climates" (the Greek *klima*, *klimatos*, slope). From meaning a part of the globe, and therefore a region, the word has come to mean the temperature and the weather of the region. "Temperature" is, of course, the way that heat and cold are *tempered*, or mixed. Shakespeare uses "temperance" both for temperature or climate, as when Adrian says of Prospero's island, in *The Tempest*, that it is "of a subtle, tender, and delicate temperance", and for restraint or moderation, as in *Coriolanus* (III. 3. 28):

"Being once chafed, he cannot
Be rein'd again to temperance."

IV

OBSOLETE WORDS AND MEANINGS

MANY English words that were used by our fore-fathers have gone out of use altogether, while others have changed considerably in meaning or in usage in the course of the centuries, and sometimes in a very subtle way. Occasionally an obsolete word or an obsolete use of a word has been kept in remembrance by a proverb, when otherwise it would have disappeared. Thus "poke", an old word for bag, has been retained in the proverb about "buying a pig in a poke", though few people have heard the word in any other connection, and few recognize a diminutive of it in "pocket", which is a *pokette*, or little bag sewn on to the clothes. So "bolt", an old word for arrow, remains in the proverb which tells us that "a fool's bolt is soon shot", though archery is a thing of the past, and all that a "bolt" suggests to most people is a bolt on a door. Precisely the same thing has happened in other languages. So, for example, the French say *n'avoir ni sou ni maille* (where we should say "not a penny to bless myself with") and *avoir maille à partir avec quelqu'un* (where we should say "a bone to pick with somebody"), in spite of the fact that *maille*, the name of a small

coin, has otherwise gone out of use (and also that *partir* no longer has the sense of divide). *Maille*, by the way, is from the Latin *metallea*, which became *metallia*, *medallia*, *meaille*, *maille*, and so is akin to our "metal" and "medal". One of our proverbial phrases, "to leave in the lurch", has developed out of an obsolete game. Bacon writes, in the essay *Of Building*, that country-houses should not be too near a great city "which *lurcheth* all provisions, and maketh everything dear". The word here evidently means to use up; it comes from an old game called *l'ourche*, in which the stakes were put into a box, where the loser had to leave them. Our phrase "to leave in the lurch" seems to have developed, under the influence of this, from an earlier saying, "to leave in the lash", which possibly has some connection with the French *lâcher*, as if it meant to loose your hold of some one in a moment of need.

Sometimes the obsolete word or the obsolete meaning has survived in dialect. The word "can" is from the Anglo-Saxon *cunnan*, to know, and is obviously related to the dialect "ken", familiar in that sense in the North of England and in Scotland. The word is related also to "cunning", which originally means "knowing", without any sense of slyness. It is interesting to remember that "couth", the past participle of the verb we have in "can",

though it has passed completely out of use itself, survives in the form of "uncouth", which formerly meant "unknown". So Manoah says in *Samson Agonistes* (332-333):

"Brethren and men of Dan (for such ye seem
Though in this uncouth place),"

where the context shows that what is meant is "this unknown, unfamiliar place". From the sense of "know" the word "can" developed the sense of "able to do", and Bacon uses it as a full verb when he writes in the essay *Of Great Place*, that "in evil, the best condition is not to will, the second not to can". Nowadays the word "can" is merely an auxiliary, with a full verb following. We still use "don" and "doff" (at least in poetry), but the kindred forms "dout" and "dup" have gone out of use, except in some dialects. To don is to "do-on" and to doff is to "do-off" a garment; to dout is to "do-out" the fire, and to dup is to "do-ope" (or do-open) the door, as in Ophelia's song:

"Then up he rose, and donn'd his clothes,
And dupp'd the chamber door;
Let in the maid, that out a maid
Never departed more."

From the Latin *gradus*, step, and the related forms, we have "grade", step, "gradual", step by step, "graduate", one who takes a step of advance-

ment in the university, and "gradient", a slope on a road or a railway which rises (though not actually by steps) as steps rise to a higher level. From *degradus* the French got their *degré*, and hence we have "degree". We used also to have an English word "gree", meaning step, which Chaucer uses in the sense of rank or superiority. It is from the Latin *gressus*, through the Old French *grès*. Shakespeare uses the form "grise", as in *Twelfth Night* (iii. i. 134-136), where Viola says, "I pity you", and when Olivia answers "That's a degree to love", replies:

"No, not a *grise*, for 'tis a vulgar proof
That very oft we pity enemies."

So also in *Othello* (i. 3. 198-201), where the Duke says:

"Let me speak like yourself, and lay a sentence,
Which, as a *grise* or step, may help these lovers
Into your favour."

When I lived in Lincoln I often passed a steep lane, called "The Grecian Stairs", which climbs the ridge to the Cathedral in a series of stepped levels. The old name was "The Greesen" (i.e. the plural of *grise*, "The Steps"), and when the meaning of the word was forgotten "Stairs" was added, and then "Greesen" was made into the entirely inappropriate "Grecian".

In some familiar words and phrases there are references to animal life which are not seen at once; because the first meaning of a word has become obsolete. The old English word "attercop", for a spider, has gone out of use except in some dialects, but it has left a trace in "cob-web", the web of a "cop". Bacon writes of "copwebs of learning" in *The Advancement of Learning* (I. 5). "Atter-cop" seems to mean poison-cup; it was an old belief that spiders were poisonous. "Spider" is from the Anglo-Saxon *spinthre, spithre*, "the spinner", from *spinnan*, to spin. We use "urchin" playfully of a little child, but the word (which is derived from the Latin *ericius*, through the Old French *ericon*) really means a hedgehog. Shakespeare has the phrase "urchin-snouted" in *Venus and Adonis* (1105), and in *The Tempest* (I. 2. 325-327) he makes Prospero threaten Caliban that:

"urchins

Shall, for the vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee."

The old English word for rabbit was "coney" (manifestly related to the Latin *cuniculus*), and it occurs in many place-names, like Conisholme and Coneysthorpe. Langland uses the form *conyng* in *Piers the Plowman* (Prologus, 193): "The while he cacceth conynges he coueiteth nought owre caroyne". The name went out of use, apparently,

because it resembled an indecent word, and was replaced by "rabbit", which at first properly meant a young rabbit, and is probably a nickname from "Robert".¹ "Coney" has had a modern revival in the ingenious name "coney-seal", for a particular kind of fur. It may be added that there are many names of animals and birds that are parallel to this derivation of "rabbit" from "Robert". We speak of a "jackdaw" and of a "jackass", of a "tomtit" and of a "tomcat". These are obvious, but some others are not quite as plain. Thus in French *margot*, a diminutive of Marguerite, became the name for a magpie, and our word "magpie" is a compound of *Mag* (Maggie, Margaret) and *pie*, from the Latin *pica*, which means magpie. The word "pie" in the culinary sense is also from *pica*, probably because a pie contains various ingredients, while the magpie has a notorious habit of collecting bits of food and other things. Similarly "Martin" was applied to the swallow, and "martlet" is a diminutive of it; hence Banquo's phrase in *Macbeth* (I. 6. 3-4):

"This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet."

¹ Similarly in French the fox has entirely lost his proper name *volpil* (the Latin *vulpes*) and is known as *renard*, from the name of the fox in the famous mediaeval epic, *Roman de Renart*, in which he plays a leading part.

So "Martlemas" was used for Martinmas. When Poins says to Bardolph in *2 King Henry IV* (ii. 2. 110): "And how doth the martlemas, your master?" the comparison is of an elderly man in ruddy health to "St. Martin's Summer", the fine days that often occur in the early part of winter. The feast of St. Martin is celebrated on November 11th. The "parrot" has his name from the French *Pierrot*, little Peter. The "robin" has his from the familiar diminutive of Robert. Where we refer to a "tom-cat" our forebears spoke of a "gib-cat". *Thibert le cas* in the *Roman de la Rose* is rendered by Chaucer, "Gibbe, our cat" (C. 6204). So Falstaff says, "I am as melancholy as a gib-cat". Gib was short for Gilbert, as in the family named Gibbs and Gibson. "Graymalkin", used by the witches in Macbeth, was a name for a she-cat. Matilda seems to have been shortened to Mald, and Malkin is a diminutive of that. "Malkin" was a proverbial name for a slattern (as in *Piers the Plowman*, i. 182, and Chaucer, *The Man of Law's Tale*, 30), and Tennyson writes in *The Princess* of a "draggled mawkin" who "tends her bristled grunters in the sludge".

The sport of hawking has left us several interesting words. Thus a "haggard" was a falcon that lived in the hedges (*hag* is an old Teutonic word for hedge) and hence an untamed hawk. This is the source of our adjective "haggard", first used of the eyes,

in the sense of wild-looking, and then generally with the modern meaning of gaunt. Shakespeare uses the word in the original sense of untamed in *Much Ado About Nothing* (III. i. 34-36), where Hero says of Beatrice:

“She is too disdainful;
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock,”

and in *Othello* (III. 3. 260-263), where the Moor says:

“If I do prove her haggard,
Though that her jesses were my dear heart-strings
I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,
To prey at fortune.”

The word “reclaim” is from the Latin *reclamare*, which meant to cry out against, to contradict, but in the sport of hawking it got the sense of calling back. The word “allure” also goes back to hawking; it is from the French *leurre*, a decoy. The word is used with the original reference to hawking in *Piers the Plowman* (v. 438-439) where Accidia says:

“For I haue and haue hadde · some dele haukes maneres,
I am noughe *lured* with loue · but there ligge aughte under
the thombe”

(i.e. I have the manners of a hawk, and am not lured with love, but only with something in the hand).

The word "debonair" is for *de bon' aire*, used of hawks. The French word *aire* has given us our "eyry", for a nest of hawks and other birds of prey, and so, in the language of falconry, *de bon' aire* meant "of a good nest", and so "of a good brood", "well-bred". Hence the meaning which the word has developed of gentle and polite.

There are many technical words used in the mediæval sport of venery, and "umbles" was one of them. It is a curious word, deriving from the Old French *nombles*, which appears to come from the Latin *lumbulus* (from *lumbus*, loin). The "umbles" of a deer were its entrails, and these were the perquisite of some of the servants of the hunt. Holinshed says that "the keeper hath the skin, head, *umbles*, chine, and shoulders".¹ "Umble-pie" was a dish made of the "umbles". When the lords and ladies feasted on the better parts of the animal, and their humble retainers got only "umble-pie", a natural pun was suggested, and so we speak of "eating humble-pie".

Where a local dialect or a proverbial saying has not helped to keep it in mind, the old word, or the old sense of the word, has often been forgotten by all except those who are familiar with our older literature. Some examples (in alphabetical order, since any logical order is scarcely possible) are given

¹ *Chronicle*, 204.

in the pages that follow. The word "afford" is now used, nine times out of ten, of the ability to pay for anything. In older English, without any such reference to means, it meant to give, or spare, as in Milton's ode *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (15-16):

"Say, heav'nly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?"

and in *Samson Agonistes* (910-911);

"*Afford* me place to shew what recompense
Toward thee I intend."

The word "anguish" is from the Latin *angustia*, narrowness, through the Old French *anguisse*. It formerly carried the sense of anxiety rather than of agony. Chaucer uses the word in this way in his translation of Boethius (III. 3. 35): "Certes, quod I it ne remembreth me not that evere I was so free of my thought that I ne was alwey in *anguish* of som-what", where the context shews that *anxiety* or *dissatisfaction* is meant.

"Buxom" was "bucksome" in earlier days; it is from the Anglo-Saxon *būgan*, to bow, and meant pliable and obedient, while "unbuxum" meant disobedient and obstinate. So in *Piers the Plowman* (I. 110):

"To be *buxome* at his biddynge · he had hem noughe elles,"

and in Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (III. 4. 32), where Neptune:

"bid

His mighty waters to them *buxome bee.*"

Now the word is always used of a woman, and suggests something like a blend of brisk, jolly, and healthy.

The word "carp" used to mean merely to talk, to chatter, and Chaucer says of the Wife of Bath (*Prologue*, 474): "In felawship wel coude she laughe and *carpe*", where the word merely means that she was a ready talker. Now (influenced probably by the Latin *carpere*, to pluck) it means to pick at small faults. "Carpet", by the way, is from the Latin word just mentioned; a carpet meant at first a sort of rug made of pieces of cloth which had been plucked into shreds. The word "coast" has come to us, through the French *côte*, from the Latin *costa*, which means a rib or a side. Virgil uses it of the sides of a cauldron. When we speak of the coast we mean the sea-side, or the *side* of the land. The word "accost" has the same root, for the late Latin *accostare* (from *costa*) meant at first to come into contact with someone, and "rub sides with", as we say "rub shoulders with". The Italian *accostare* means to bring nearer together, and so to be in close contact: *accoster* has some similar uses in French, and as applied to shipping it means expressly

to come alongside. From the sense of meeting our word "accost" developed the sense of greeting. There seems to be something of the earlier meaning in the word when Sir Toby Belch says to Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* (i. 3. 59-60): "You mistake, knight; 'accost' is front her, board her, woo her, assail her". The word "cheer" really means face; it is through the French *chère* from the late Latin *cara*. It has the original meaning in Chaucer, as in *Troilus and Criseyde* (i. 14):

"And to a sorwful tale, a sory *chere*,"

and in the *Friar's Tale* (1265-1266):

"This worthy Lymytour, this noble Frere,
He made alway a maner louryng *chiere*
Upon the Somonour,"

and in the *Summoner's Tale* (2157-2158), where we read that they:

"chaced out the frere
And forth he gooth with a ful angry *cheere*."

But in the Prologue to the *Clerk of Oxford's Tale* (6-7) the host says to the scholar:

"For Goddes sake! as beth of bettre *cheere*!
It is no tyme for to studien heere,"

where the word seems to be half-way to its present significance, "a better countenance" in the sense of

"a better mood". The original sense is found in Shakespeare, where Portia says, in *The Merchant of Venice* (III. 2. 315): "Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer", and where Oberon says of Helena, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (III. 2. 96): "All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer". To be "of good cheer" is a natural enough derivation of sense from being of a merry countenance; "good cheer" in the sense of food is not quite so obvious, but it evidently arises from the fact that a man's aspect is brightened by a good meal! "Conceit" now means thinking too well of oneself, but formerly it meant "conception": it is from the Latin *conceptus*, through the French. When Bacon writes, in the essay *Of Judicature*, that "it is no grace in a judge . . . to show quickness of conceit in cutting off evidence or counsel too short", he means what we should call quickness of apprehension. Then the word developed other meanings, as every reader of Shakespeare knows. It is not easy to define all the senses of "conceit" in Shakespeare; it covers all that we should mean by conception, fancy, device, and skill. Cloten says in *Cymbeline* (II. 3. 16) of the song that is to follow: "First, a very excellent good-conceived thing", where the meaning is obviously what we should call "well-conceived" or "well-devised". "Consent" used to mean agreement or harmony generally, as where Bacon writes in the essay *Of*

Deformity, "Certainly there is a *consent* between the body and the mind", and where Milton writes in *At a Solemn Music* (6-8) of:

"That undisturbèd song of pure *concent*,
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To Him that sits thereon."

Now "consent" has been almost narrowed to the meaning of yielding agreement to some particular proposal. We use "consort" both as a noun and as a verb, for we speak of a king's "consort", and of "consorting" with different sets of people. The word is from the Latin *consors*, *consortis*, which is compounded of *con* and *sors*, a lot, and means one who shares the same lot with another, a partner, a comrade. In earlier times the English word was used in the sense of company or assembly. So Bacon writes, in the essay *Of Council*: "In private, men are more bold in their own humours, and, in *consort*, men are more obnoxious to others' humours". The meaning of "converse" and "conversation" has become restricted to "talk", but the words used to have a much wider sense. "Converse" meant to dwell among and associate with, as when Bacon writes in *The Advancement of Learning* (v. 9) of calling "philosophy down from heaven to *converse* upon the earth", where the meaning is to live upon earth, and in fellowship with men. "Conversation"

meant the whole course and conduct of life, as the Authorised Version of Phil. i. 27, "Let your *conversation* be as becometh the gospel of Christ", and as when Bacon again says, in the essay *Of Friendship*, that the only defence for a love of solitude is that it should proceed out of "a desire to sequester a man's self for a higher *conversation*". "Curiosity" used to mean nicety or triviality. Bacon writes in *The Advancement of Learning* (6) of "this same unprofitable subtlety or *curiosity*", and Shakespeare in *King Lear* (I. 2. 4) makes Edmund say:

"Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The *curiosity* of nations to deprive me,"

where the sense is "the trivial and irrational custom of nations". From meaning mere triviality the word has come to mean generally a spirit of inquisitiveness as to small matters.

The word "dear" had at first the general sense of excessive, as when Celia says, in *As You Like It* (I. 3. 35): "My father hated his father *dearly*: yet I hate not Orlando", and as when we say that a commodity is "dear", or excessive in price. The other sense of the word has developed from that; a person is "dear" to us when we have an excessive affection for him. The Latin *damnatio*, from *damnum*, loss, injury, has given us the word "damnation",

and *damnum* has also given us the word "damage", through the French *dommage*. In late Latin *damnum* was used of a fine, and it was often rendered by the French *dommage*. This acquired the sense of trespass, and from *damager*, to seize cattle found trespassing, was formed the word *domigerium*, the authority to exact a fine for trespass. This became "damger" and "danger", and to be "in danger of anyone" meant to be in his power, and liable to a penalty or hurt that he might inflict. Chaucer tells us of the Summoner (*Prologue*, 663–664) that:

"In *daunger* hadde he at his owene gise
The yonge girles of the diocese,"

i.e. the young people (of both sexes) of the diocese were within the control of his office. So Portia says to Antonio, referring to Shylock's claim, in *The Merchant of Venice* (iv. i. 180): "You stand within his *danger*, do you not?" It was from this sense of being in the power of an enemy that the modern sense of peril has come.

We use "eager" with an ethical meaning, as keen in desire or deed, but it formerly meant keen in a wider sense, as where Hamlet says (i. 4. 1–2): "The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold", and Horatio answers, "It is a nipping and an *eager* air."

A "grange" is properly a barn (from *granum*, corn) and then an outlying farm. Brabantio says in

Othello (I. i. 107–108), when Roderigo comes to tell him that he is robbed of his daughter:

“What tells’t thou me of robbing? this is Venice;
My house is not a *grange*,”

i.e. “My house is in the midst of a great city, and it is not to be robbed as if it were a lonely dwelling in the country”.

“Handsome” originally meant pleasant to handle (as “toothsome” still means pleasant to taste) and then developed the sense of pleasant to see, or “easy to look at”, in the American idiom. I imagine that when Dogberry says in *Much Ado About Nothing* (iv. 2. 84–89) that he is “a householder and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and everything *handsome* about him”, it really means that he was well enough provided and had all things necessary at hand, rather than that his gowns and the rest were beautiful.

The word “indifferent” now means either “poor” or “unconcerned”, as when we say that a man writes “indifferent verse”, and when we say that we are “perfectly indifferent” in some matter. But the word used to mean “impartial”, as in the suffrage for magistrates in the Book of Common Prayer: “that they may truly and *indifferently* minister justice”.

So in the Prayer Book again "the *kindly* fruits of the earth" means "the natural fruits". The word "kind" meant "nature"; it is practically the same word as "kin". We still speak of different "kinds" of animals. Langland frequently uses the phrase "kynde wytte" in *Piers the Plowman* (as in *Prologue*, 114, and 1. 55), where it means "natural intelligence", or what we should call "common sense". From such phrases as a "kind" feeling in the sense of a "natural" feeling, the word has come to mean "friendly".

The word "leer" is from the Anglo-Saxon *hledr*, face. So in *Piers the Plowman* (1. 3): "A loueli ladi of *lere* · in lynnen yclothed", means "a lady lovely of countenance, clothed in linen". So also in Shakespeare, as where Celia says in *As You Like It* (iv. 1. 67), "He hath a Rosalind of a better *leer* than you", meaning "look" or "complexion". From "look" the word came to mean a particular kind of unpleasant look, a *leer*. "Lewd" is the Anglo-Saxon *leowede*, lay, either connected with the Latin *laicus*, or from *leod*, the people (the German *Leute*). From meaning "lay-folk", it came to mean "unlettered", as in *Piers the Plowman* (iv. 11): "How thow lernest the peple . the lered and the *lewede*", i.e. the learned and the unlearned. Then from meaning untaught it came to have the worst sense of licentious. Similarly the word "vulgar"

(from the Latin *vulgaris*, the common people) at first simply meant common, as in *Hamlet* (I. 2. 98-99):

"As common
As any the most *vulgar* thing to sense."

Now the word has the sense of coarse and offensive to good taste. The word "let", which now means to allow, formerly meant also to hinder, as in the Authorised Version of Rom. i. 13: "I purposed to come to you but was *let* (έκωλύθην) hitherto", and 2 Thess. ii. 7: "He that *letteth* (οὐ κατέχων) will *let* until he be taken out of the way" (where the Revised Version reads, in the first passage, "But was *hindered* hitherto", and in the second passage, "There is one that *restraineth* now until he be taken out of the way"). So also in Shakespeare, as where Viola says in *Twelfth Night* (v. 1. 256-260):

"If nothing *lets* to make us happy both
But this my masculine usurped attire,
Do not embrace me till each circumstance
Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump
That I am Viola."

Though the old meaning no longer survives in ordinary speech, we still use the phrase "without *let* or hindrance", and we still speak of "a *let* ball" in the game of tennis. The fact appears to be that we really have two different words "let"; one from the Anglo-Saxon *laetan*, meaning to permit (akin

to the German *lassen* and the French *laisser*); and one from the Anglo-Saxon *letten*, meaning to delay, and so to hinder, akin to our word "late". But both forms of the primitive word appear to derive from a root that means *slow*, *slack*, as if they had grown to mean, first, "slack, and therefore allowing easily", and, second, "slack, and therefore making late". The word "lively" now means active, sprightly, vivacious, but it used to mean "living", as in the prayer for the clergy in the Communion Office, "that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth Thy true and *lively* Word", where the reference is to the living Word of God. "Livery" used to mean any allowance made to dependents, whether for clothes or anything else. There are references in old documents to "candle-livery", or allowance for candles. The word derives ultimately from the Latin *liberare*, to set free, through the French *livrer*, which means to deliver or hand over to anyone. From meaning an allowance handed over to an employee for clothing, and for other things, the word has come to mean an official kind of clothing, a footman's or a coachman's "livery", for example. Already by Shakespeare's time it must have had the sense of clothing, for in *A Lover's Complaint* (104-105) there are the lines:

"His rudeness so with his authorized youth
Did *livery* falseness in a pride of truth,"

and it evidently means clothing (by a metaphor for complexion) in *The Merchant of Venice* (II. i. 1), where the Prince of Morocco says:

“Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,”

but in several other instances Shakespeare uses the word as equivalent to the *delivery* to anyone of an estate of which he has been wrongfully deprived. Milton uses the word with something of its modern sense, for he writes in *L'Allegro* (61-62):

“Rob'd in flames and amber light
The clouds in thousand liveries dight.”

We use the word “measles” of a children's disease, but it often means “leprosy” in earlier days, and *mesell* or *mysel* was used of a leper. The passage in 2 Kings v. 1, relating to Naaman, which in the Authorised Version reads: “He was also a mighty man of valour, but he was a leper”, is rendered by Wiclis, “Forsythe he was a stronge man and riche, but *mesell*”. The word “meat” used to mean food of any kind; it has been narrowed to flesh-food in modern times, though we still retain the original sense in “sweetmeat”, and in a proverb like “one man's meat is another man's poison”. “Mere”, the old word for sea, the Latin *mare*, has degenerated into the name of a lake, as in Windermere, but we

still retain the primitive sense in “*mermaid*”, a sea-maiden. The word “*minion*” originally meant darling (like the French *mignon*, whence the name of the flower, “*mignonette*”). The phrase in *Macbeth* (ii. 4. 15) about Duncan’s horses: “Beauteous and swift, the *minions* of their race”, means “the very pick of their kind”. Now it has come to mean a favourite, in an unworthy sense, a flatterer and a lackey.

“Naughty” was a stronger word of old than it is to-day. Obviously it first of all meant worthless, or what is “a thing of naught”, and in Shakespeare it is equivalent to wicked, as in *The Merchant of Venice*, (v. 1. 90–91), where Portia says:

“How far that little candle throws his beam!
So shines a good deed in a *naughty* world.”

To-day the word is only used of some trivial transgression, such as a child’s deed. The word “nice” is (through the Old French) from the Latin *nescius*, ignorant, and meant successively foolish, weak, subtle, and dainty. One may compare the last stages in this with our double use of “*delicate*”—“*a delicate* (or weakly) state of health”, and “*a delicate* (or subtle) sense of taste”. In Shakespeare “nice” usually means precise, punctilious, or subtle.

In general usage the word “*obnoxious*” now means objectionable; it formerly meant liable to,

subject to, in danger of. Bacon writes in the essay *Of Ambition* of being “*obnoxious* to ruin”, and Milton in *Paradise Lost* (ix. 168–170):

“But what will not ambition and revenge
Descend to? Who aspires, must down as low
As high he soared; *obnoxious*, first or last,
To basest things.”

The word is the Latin *obnoxious* (from *ob* and *noxia*), which meant liable to danger or damage.

Our word “pert” is from the Latin *apertus*, open, and “apert” means “openly” in Chaucer, as in *The Squire's Tale* (530–531):

“That evermore myn honour and renoun
Were saved, bothe privee and apert.”

“Apert”, which became “pert”, seems to have acquired the meaning of “skilful” (as if it were from *expertus*) and then passed from “skilful” to “ready”, and from “ready” to the present sense of “forward and presumptuous”. “Malapert” is used by Chaucer in the sense of “forward”, as in *Troilus and Criseyde* (iii. 87–88):

“Al nere be *malapert*, or made it tough,
Or was to bold.”

“Impertinence” now means rudeness; it used to mean “irrelevance”, as where Bacon writes, in the essay *Of Marriage and Single Life*, of those whose “thoughts do end with themselves, and account

future times *impertinencies*”. But we have retained the proper meaning of “pertinent”. We now use the word “plausible” of what has an appearance, and only an appearance, of being reasonable and right, but it properly means that which deserves praise (the Latin *plausibilis*, from *plaudere*, to applaud). The earlier meaning is seen in Bacon’s essay *Of Seditions and Troubles*, where he says that sometimes “the best actions of a State, and the most *plausible*, and which ought to give greatest contentment, are taken in ill sense, and traduced”. “Posy” is the same word as “poesie”. Hamlet says, referring to the doggerel rhymes of the player (III. 2. 162): “Is this a prologue or the posy of a ring?” “Poesie” is contracted to “posy” in this sense of a rhyming motto on a ring or a knife; then, because such a rhyme was also frequently attached to a nosegay, we have the other sense, a “posy” of flowers. The word “prevent”, from the Latin *praevenire*, literally means to go before, to precede, and for a long time it retained that sense in English. The Collect says “*Prevent* us, O Lord, in all our doings with Thy most gracious favour”. Milton wrote, in his great ode *On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity* (iv. 22–25):

“See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet!
O! run; *prevent* them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at His blessed feet.”

Izaak Walton records that he rose very early one morning to go fishing, "*preventing the sunrise*". From the sense of going before anyone, the word naturally developed the worst sense of getting in their way, and so hindering them. The word "provoke" now means to offend, and to incite only to anger; formerly it meant to incite to any emotion of any deed, as where the Authorised Version reads in 2 Cor. ix. 2: "Your zeal hath *provoked* very many", and where Bacon writes in the essay *Of Death*: "After Otho the Emperor had slain himself, pity (which is the tenderest of affections) *provoked* many to die, out of mere compassion to their Sovereign". The word "propriety" now means proper behaviour, an observance of the decencies of life: it used to mean the same as "property", in the sense of what is proper or peculiar to anyone or anything, as where Bacon writes of St. Paul in the essay *Of Unity in Religion* that "the *propriety* of his vocation drew him to have a special care of those without", and where Milton writes in *Paradise Lost* (iv. 750):

"Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole *propriety*
In Paradise of all things common else!"

The word "quaint" is from the Latin *cognitus*, known, through the French *cointe*; our word

"acquaint", to make known, derives in the same way. "Quaint" had the earlier sense of clever or elegant (one may compare our use of "knowing"). So often in Shakespeare, as in *The Merchant of Venice*, where Salanio advises (ii. 4. 27-28):

"Tis vile, unless it may be *quaintly* order'd
And better in my mind not undertook,"

and in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (ii. 1. 128), where Silvia says: "Yes, yes, the lines are very *quaintly* writ".

We have retained "rather", the comparative form of the word, but "rathe", the positive, and "rathest", the superlative, have gone out of use. The meaning is "early". So Milton writes in *Lycidas* (142): "Bring the *rathe* primrose that forsaken dies". When we say that we had "rather" do this than that, the idiom is exactly the same as when we say that we had "sooner" do this than that. So we have retained "reckless", regardless, but we have given up using the verb "to reck", which occurs, for example, in a familiar passage in *Hamlet* (i. 3. 46-51), where Ophelia says to Laertes:

"But, good my brother,
Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Shew me the steep and thorny way to heaven;
Whiles, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And *recks* not his own rede."

"Science," the Latin *scientia*, properly means knowledge, as when we read in the Authorised Version of 1 Tim. vi. 20, of the "oppositions of science falsely so called" where the word is *gnōsis*, and as when Gray wrote:

"Fair *Science* frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own."

To-day the word has been narrowed down to mean only knowledge of a particular kind. In a historical novel which appeared recently, dealing with the first half of the seventeenth century, one of the characters remarks, "The best hope's in the *scientists*, and they're chained and fettered". The writer observes in the preface that care has been taken to make no character in the novel use any word or idiom not demonstrably used at that period. Now there is no recorded use of "scientist" before 1840. Anyone at the time of the novel would probably have said: "The best hope lieth in the natural philosophers", or something like that.

"Tax" is from the Latin *taxare*, and had at first the meaning of censure, as often in Shakespeare. So Hamlet says (1. 4. 17-18):

"This heavy-headed revel east and west
Makes us traduced and *tax'd* of other nations."

Something of this sense is left when we say that we "tax" anyone with a fault. *Taxare* has a second sense,

to value, to estimate, and it is from this that the present use of the word tax has been developed, with the meaning of a levy made by the government of the country upon the wealth of its citizens. The two senses of the word are not really so far removed, as may be illustrated by our use of the word "charge", for we can "make a charge" against a man either in the sense of blaming him with an offence, or of rendering him liable to a payment.

"Weird" originally meant "fate" (from the Anglo-Saxon *wyrd*), and the sense is retained in Scottish dialect, as when Meg Merrilees says to Dominie Sampson, "Tell him the time's coming now, and the weird's dred", and when Rob Roy says, after the murder of Morris, "But every wight has his weird, and we maun a' dee when our day comes". "The weird sisters" in *Macbeth* means "the fate-sisters". The word is Theobald's emendation for the "weyward" of the folios, but "weird" is undoubtedly the word that Shakespeare meant. His use of it is an interesting detail. Apparently he got the word from Holinshed's *Chronicle*, "The woordes also of the three weird sisters wold not out of his mind". The ultimate source is said to be Bellenden's version of the *Historia Scotorum* by Hector Boece, where it is recorded that Macbeth and Banquo met three women that "were jugit be the pepill to be weird sisters". Chaucer uses the word (in the

plural) in *Troilus and Criseyde* (III. 618): "But O Fortune, executrice of *wierdes*", i.e. of destinies. Now the noun has become an adjective, with the meaning "uncanny". The word was revived by Scott, but it was apparently Shelley who misunderstood it, and gave it currency in the modern sense.

V

TRADE AND COMMERCE

MANY names connected with trades have interesting derivations. Some are obvious, but some take us by devious routes into the history of the past. A "barber" plainly gets his name, which has become a fairly common patronymic, from the Latin *barba*, beard, and the word "barb", used of an arrow or of a fish-hook, comes from the same source, because of the fancied likeness to a forked beard. A "butcher" (the French *boucher*) is properly a seller of goat's flesh; *bouc*, he-goat, is the same word as our "buck". A "butler" gets his name from the "buttery", the place where the *butts* or barrels were kept.

A "carpenter" is the Latin *carpentarius*, a maker of carts, from *carpentum*, a car, a chariot. (The word "chariot" is from the Latin *carrus*, a waggon, through the French *char*.) The slang word "chap" is an abbreviation of "chapman," the Anglo-Saxon *ceapman*, a dealer, a merchant, as in the words of Avarice, in *Piers the Plowman* (v. 233-234):

"Thus ones I was herberwed, quod he · with an hep of
chapmen

I roos when thei were arrest · and yrifled here males,"

(i.e. I was lodged with a heap of merchants. I rose while they rested, and rifled their packs). The word is the source of the very common family name "Chapman". We have the same root in "chap-book", for a book sold by a pedlar, and in "cheap" and "chaffer". "Cheapside" and "Eastcheap" were the great centres of trade in the city of London, and "Lombard Street", where the Lombard money-changers were established, is close by. The word "cheap" and the other words related to it probably all go back to the Latin *caupo*, which means a wine-dealer, and more generally a huckster. A "cordwainer" derives his name from the city of Cordova in Spain, once famous for its leather, which was called "cordovan", "cordeven", and "cordwayne". A "costermonger" is originally a "costard-monger", a seller of "costards", or apples. The word seems to have derived from the Old French *coste*, the Latin *costa*, rib, because the costard was a ribbed apple. The word "cutlet", by the way, derives in a similar fashion, for *coste* becomes *côte*, flank, side, and then the diminutive *côtelette* is developed; a cutlet is properly a little side piece. The word "accost" has the same origin, for it means to come side by side, to approach, and then to greet. "Costard" is used in Shakespeare as a slang word for head. In *King Lear* (iv. 6. 247), when Edgar is pretending to be a yokel, he says to Oswald: "Keep

out, or I'se try whether your costard or my ballow (i.e. cudgel) be the harder." There are, of course, many similar uses of the name of anything round as slang for head.

A "draper" is a seller of cloth; the word is from the French *drap*, the late Latin *drappus*, cloth. We say that we "drape" anything when we hang cloth over it. The "trappings" of woe are the "drapings" of woe; the word was used originally of the caparison of a horse. The word "drab" meant at first the colour of cloth before it was dyed. A "milliner" is a "Milaner", who dealt in goods from Milan, such as gloves and ribbons. A "tailor" is a cutter of cloth, the French *tailleur*. The word has given us the family name of "Taylor". The French *tailler*, to cut, is probably the source of "tally", a stick which was cut or notched to keep a reckoning. Tallies were made in pairs so that the notches corresponded, and so we say that one statement "tallies" with another.¹ A "farrier" originally meant a smith who shoes horses, as in the French *ferrer un*

¹ According to Scott the use of tallies survived in Scotland until late in the eighteenth century. In *The Antiquary* Mrs. Shortbread, the baker's wife, declares that "Monkbarns is a douce honest man —we serve the family wi' bread and he settles wi' huz ilka week—only he was in an unco kippage when we sent him a book instead o' the *nick-sticks*, whilk, he said, were the true ancient way o' counting between tradesmen and customers; and sae they are, nae doubt."

cheval, "to shoe (literally, to *iron*) a horse", from the Latin *fer*, iron.

The "grocer" was formerly called a "spicer", as he still is called an *épicier* on the other side of the Channel. This accounts for the fairly common name of "Spicer". The grocer's present name really means one who deals "in gross". The "chemist" gets his name from the Arabic *al-kimiya*, which also gives us the word "alchemy". The mediaeval alchemist, who was concerned with the transmutation of the baser metals into gold, has bequeathed his name to the modern pharmacist. The word "hostler" is from the French *hostelier*, the host of an inn, but the word got its present meaning in early times. In the reign of Richard II it is recorded that a man was punished for making short weight in horse-bread, and stood in the pillory with a bottle of hay at his back, *in signum hostillarii*, as a mark of a hostler. In Chaucer the word seems to mean the servants of an inn generally—"everich hostiler and tappestere" (*Prologue*, 241); "whan this folk of lowe degree, as thilke that holden hostelries, sustenen the thefte of hir hostilers" (*The Parson's Tale*, 435).

A "plumber" is a man who works in lead, the Latin *plumbum*. When we refer to "aplomb", meaning assurance, a self-possessed and self-confident manner, we are using the same word, for the French *à plomb* means to stand upright, to be

"plumb" straight, like a "plummet"—two other words that derive in the same way. The man who is assured of himself does not cringe, but stands up straight. The "potter" gets his name from the pots he makes, and "pot" is probably derived from the Latin *potus*, drink. A "stationer" is now a tradesmen who sells writing materials, and so forth. The word has narrowed its meaning curiously, for it really described one who had a "station", or fixed place of business, as against a wandering pedlar. The modern sense of the word seems to have derived from the fact that some tradesmen with a stationary establishment had a special licence to sell books, especially in London, Oxford, and Cambridge.

A "soldier" is etymologically a "paid" man. The word is akin to the French *sou* (formerly *sol*) and the Italian *soldo*—the latter word, by the way, still carries a special sense of soldiers' pay. The words are all from the late Latin *solidus*, a gold coin, the initial letter of which, oddly enough, has given us the sign for silver in £. s. d. (*librae, solidi, denarii*). A "steward" is really a "sty-ward", the Anglo-Saxon *stigweard*, but "sty" was used in earlier days of almost any kind of pen in which animals were kept. Since the "sty-ward" was responsible for all the enclosures in which the fowls, pigs, and cattle lived, the general catering for the household became his business. It is odd that a

name of such humble origin should have become the name of the royal house of Scotland, as "Stuart", and also that a similarly humble occupation, that of the "hogward", should have given us the aristocratic name of "Howard". "Scavenger", the modern form of the older "scavager", derives from *scavage*, a duty in goods, which appears to be related to the Anglo-Saxon *scawian*, to show. The modern sense seems to derive from the fact that a "scavager" was a kind of inspector of goods for sale, and since many of these were sold in the streets, he came to have some charge of the streets, and so finally developed into a cleaner of streets.

The word "engineer" has a curious history. Our "ingenious" is from the Latin *ingeniosus* (from *ingenium*, properly what is inborn, and therefore with the sense of natural ability). From meaning clever in a general way, the word has come to have a special sense of mechanical skill. Hence our words "engine", through the French *engin*, and "engineer", which was formerly "enginer", as in Shakespeare, where Hamlet says (III. 4. 205-207):

"Let it work;
For 'tis the sport to have the *enginer*
Hoist with his own petar."

That sense is still retained in the name of the corps of Royal Engineers in the Army, but the name has

been extended to all mechanical experts. "Ingenuous" is a closely related word. From the same meaning of inborn it has the secondary sense in Latin of well born, and then free, frank, noble, candid. Hence the modern sense of artless, both in our "ingenuous" and in the French *ingénue*.

Some of the more general words for trade and commerce are interesting. In early days a trade was often called a "mystery". Now our modern word "mystery" is the Latin *mysterium*, the Greek *mustērion*, which meant secret doctrine, but was generally used in the plural, *ta mustēria*, with the sense of secret and solemn religious rites. The word derives from *mustēs*, an initiate, which is from *muēin*, a word that primarily means to shut—to close the eyes or close the lips. So "mystery" has the modern sense of secrecy and obscurity. But the word was used in the Middle Ages of a religious play, from the French *mystère*. There has been an interesting confusion at this point. The mediaeval mysteries were often acted by the guilds, the confraternities of craftsmen, and "mystery" was used of a handicraft. So Bacon says in *The Advancement of Learning* (1. 6) that it will suggest "many ingenious practices in all trades . . . when the experiences of several *mysteries* shall fall under the consideration of one man's mind". Here the word is probably from the Latin *ministerium*, an office, then an employ-

ment, then a trade. The development is *ministerium*, *minsterium*, *misterium*, then the Old French *mistier*, *mestier*, whence the modern French *métier*, trade. Chaucer uses "mister" for trade in the *Canterbury Tales* (Prologue, 613-614):

"In youth he lernèd hadde a good *myster*;
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter."

It has been suggested that "mystery" in this sense is simply a form of "mastery", but there seems to be an unquestionable line of descent in French from *ministerium*. Probably the development of the whole series of French and English words has been influenced by the Latin *magisterium*, mastery.

It may be added that *mister* meant not only trade, but need, in our earlier speech. "Myster woman" is used in the ordinances and statutes of Kingsthorpe (1547) in the sense of pauper. James V of Scotland, in answer to the letter of Henry VIII advising him to secularize the monasteries, said "I thank God I am able to live well enough on what I have, and I have friends that will not see me *mister*", i.e. want. Much earlier there is a similar use of the word (as a noun) in the *Romaunt of the Rose* (5614): "That he of mete hath no *myster*". The sense of "need" probably arose from the other sense of the word by way of some thought of work as necessary.

The word "commerce" in earlier English meant

intercourse generally, and Milton wrote in *Il Penseroso* (39-40):

“And looks *commerring* with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes.”

The word is from the Latin *commercium*, which had a primary sense of trade and a secondary sense of general intercourse. Now we use the English word “commerce” principally of trade. The word “trade” seems to have been introduced by the Hansa merchants from some Low German word with the same root as the modern German *treten* and our “tread”. The sense is that of a regular course of commerce, like a path that we regularly tread to and fro. This, by the way, is the sense of the word in “trade-wind”, which does not mean a wind that serves the purposes of commerce (though that wind used to do so), but a wind that blows regularly along one track.

A good deal of commerce is naturally trade in foreign commodities, and this has brought in foreign names and foreign words. “Lombard Street” is still a financial centre, and the name reminds us that the Lombards were merchants and money-lenders in the Middle Ages. Langland couples them with the Jews in *Piers the Plowman* (v. 241-242), where Avarice says: “in my youthe
I lerned amonge *lumbards* · and iewes a lessoun.”

Our use of "lumber" and "lumber"-room connects with the fact that the Lombards were pawnbrokers, who held a variety of goods in pledge against their loans. "Cash" is from the Italian *cassa*, a chest, and originally meant a merchant's money chest. The words "bank" and "bench" are closely related. We use "bench" of a seat, as when we say that "the magistrate is on the bench", and also of a workman's table, as when we refer to "a carpenter's bench". "Bank" in the sense of an institution for the deposit and exchange of money derives from a moneychanger's "bank", "bench", or table. So in Chaucer, as where Dan John says in *The Shipman's Tale* (1546-1549):

"I thanke yow, by God and by Seint Jame!
But natheless I took unto oure dame,
Your wyf at hom, the same gold ageyn
Upon youre *bench*; she woot it wel certeyn."

"Bankrupt" means "bank-broken". "Banquet" is a diminutive of *banc*, bench, table, and has come to mean a feast, much as we speak of someone "keeping a good table". Our word "shambles" (the Anglo-Saxon *sceamtel*, and the Latin *scamellum*, from *scamnum*, a bench) has a similar origin. The shambles are really the butchers' benches for the sale of meat.

The Greek word *bursa* means hide, leather, wine-skin. The late Latin *byrsa* means a leather bag for

money. This has given us "bursar", and "bursary", as well as the noun "purse", and also the verb, "to purse your lips", as the mouth of a bag is wrinkled when drawn tight. It has also given the French the word *bourse*. Bacon, in the essay *Of Travel*, writes of "exchanges, *burses*, warehouses", and Stow, writing of the foundation of the Royal Exchange, says that the ground was "given to Sir Thomas Gresham, knight, agent to the Queen's highness, thereupon to build a *burse*, or place for merchants to assemble, at his own proper charges". The name derives from a burse, or purse, being hung up as a sign over a merchant's exchange. Our word "pursy", meaning short and fat, has nothing to do with "purse", by the way. It is derived from the Old French *pourcif*, earlier *poulsif*, which comes from the Latin *pulsare*, to throb. The word pursy originally meant "short of breath". We speak of the Chancellor of the Exchequer "introducing the Budget". The word "budget" is merely an old name for a wallet or a pouch, the Old French *bougette*. From meaning a money-bag it has acquired the sense of a financial statement. The derivation of "fiscal" is similar. It comes from the Latin *fiscus*, which meant at first a wicker-basket, then a receptacle for money, and then the public treasury. The word "finance" goes back to the Latin *finis*, end. The word "fine" came to mean a *final* settle-

ment, which was often by way of a payment. The modern sense of finance appears to have developed from the *financiers* in France before the Revolution, who, from being collectors of fines or taxes, came to be the managers of the monetary system of the kingdom. The adjective "fine" has a similar derivation, from *finitus*, finished—the thing is well finished, and therefore elegant.

A merchant's "ledger" derives its name from the Old English word *liggen*, to lie. It meant originally a liturgical volume that lay regularly in one fixed place in the church. A business "firm" and a "farm" in the country derive their names from one source. In early days land was generally held by vassals on condition of their supplying their lord with a part of the produce, or undertaking various services for his benefit. Later this was often commuted for a *fixed* payment (in Latin, *firma*) of money, and thence came the word "farm". Our word "firm" in the material sense means *fixed*. "Firm" in the sense of a business partnership derives from the same source (Latin, *firmare*, to confirm) by way of meaning, first, a ratifying signature, and then the title of the business.

The word "average" is interesting, and rather difficult. *Averagium* in late Latin meant the service due to a lord by his tenants in the matter of carrying loads to a distance with their cattle, or *averia*, for

averium had the sense of goods, possessions, and so cattle. Then there seems to have been confusion between this and an old German word *Haferei*, *Havarie*, of which the primitive meaning was damage at sea. This became in French *avarie*, and was used of the leakage or the decay of merchandise in transit. When goods were jettisoned in a storm to save the vessel the loss was charged in proportion on the whole cargo, or "averaged", and so we have the modern sense of the word.

Many words derive from the names of places by way of commerce in early times. Thus "bronze" is probably from Brundusium, and "copper" is certainly from Cyprus (*κύπρος*): it was known as *Cyprium aes*, Cyprian brass, and later as *cyprium* and *cuprum*. The flower known as "candytuft" was brought from Candia, or Crete. The "magnet" is the stone from Magnesia in Thessaly, which has also given its name to the metal called "magnesium" and the oxide called "magnesia". "Money" is so called from the temple of Juno Moneta, where the Roman "mint" was, which also derives from *moneta* by way of the Anglo-Saxon *mynet*. The "dollar" (the German *Thaler*) was first minted in the sixteenth century at Joachimsthal (Joachim's valley) in Bohemia. The word "dollar" (*Thaler*) is merely a contraction of "Joachimsthaler", and would be exactly represented in English by "daler".

The oldest silver mine in Europe is said to be that at Joachimsthal. What is the connection, by the way, between a mine, the "metals", a man of "mettle", the wearing of a "medal", and an antique "medallion"? The Greek word *metallaō* (from *meta* and *alla*, "after other") is literally "to search after other things", thus to explore, and *metallon* means a mine, an exploration of the earth. Hence we have *metallum*, metal. The word "mettle" is merely a different spelling; a "man of mettle" is a parallel phrase to "a man of iron", though the meaning has become rather different. A "medal" is made of metal; hence the name. A "medallion" is a bas-relief or a circular ornament which may enclose a portrait; the word is derived from medal.

The word "argosy", which has now become restricted to poetic use, means a ship of Ragusa, the port in Dalmatia, and was once used in that literal and commercial sense; the form "ragusye" occurs in the sixteenth century. But the word has certainly been influenced by the name Argo, the ship of Jason and the Argonauts. In mediaeval Latin *argis* was used for a ship, as, for example, by Gregory of Tours. The same influence is probably present in the obsolete French word *argousin*, formerly used of a warden in charge of convicts. It originally meant an officer of the galleys. In the sixteenth century it was *algosans*, and it is supposed

to be corrupted from the Spanish *alguazil*, but it has probably been assimilated in form to "argosy". A "baldachin" is the canopy over the altar in a Catholic church; the word originally meant the stuff of which it was made, and it derives from Bagdad by way of the Italian form of the name, Baldacco. Chinese pottery was introduced into England in the sixteenth century, and it was long thought that only China possessed the kind of clay that was necessary to make it; so "china" became a generic word for porcelain. The word "porcelain" derives from the pig, for *porcella*, a diminutive of *porca*, a sow, was the name of a particular kind of sea-shell, and the pottery was called *porcellana*, because it had a shell-like glaze on the surface. We call rough pottery "delf" from Delft in Holland. The fur known as "ermine" has that name because the animal is found in Armenia. The pigment known as "gamboge" is from Cambodia. A "swede" is a turnip from Sweden. We derive "parchment", which is sheep's skin or goat's skin prepared for writing upon, by way of the French *parchenin*, and the Latin *pergamena charta*, from Pergamos, where it was invented. A "polony" is a Bologna sausage. A "spaniel" is the Spanish dog, from the Latin *Hispaniolus* through the Old French *espagneul*. The word "sardine" and "sardonic" both derive from Sardinia, in all probability, the one meaning

the Sardinian fish and the other said to be derived from *herba Sardonia*, a plant which was poisonous and produced convulsions in the features before death;¹ hence a "sardonic" smile really means a contorted smile.

The word "pheasant" derives from Phasis, the Greek name of a river in Asia. The "guinea-fowl" owes its name to Guinea, and so does the "guinea-pig", though the latter comes from Brazil. The trading vessels called "guineamen" (mostly slave ships) sailed from England to Africa, crossed the Atlantic, and then returned to England, so that they brought home American as well as African produce. The Christmas "turkey" is a curious misnomer. The bird is a native of America, and the folk-rhyme assures us that:

"Hops and turkeys, carp and beer,
Came into England the same year,"

as they probably did come more or less together in the reign of Henry VIII, but we have named the bird as if it came from Turkey. So the French call the Turkey *dindon*, for *cog d'Inde*, or Indian cock, and the Germans call it the *calecutische Hahn*, the

¹ Pausanias says that Sardinia produces a grass, like parsley in appearance, which is a deadly poison, and those who eat of it die laughing. "This is the origin", he adds, "of Homer and subsequent writers speaking of the Sardonic laughter when things are in evil plight." *Description of Greece*, x. 17. Cf. *Odyssey*, xx. 301-302.

Calicut cock, or the *welsche Hahn*, the foreign cock, as our word "walnut" really means foreign nut—Chaucer calls it "walsh-note" in *The House of Fame* (1281). By a kind of misnomer similar to some that have been quoted above the strange people who call themselves the Romany (which seems to derive from their own word "rom", man) are called "gipsies" in English, as if they came from Egypt, and *bohémiens* in French, as if they came from Bohemia.

Among woven materials "buckram" is possibly from Bokhara, and "cashmere" is certainly from Kashmir; "calico" is from Calicut in India; "damask", meaning both the material and the colour, is from Damascus, and so is "damson". The old form was "damascen", and as late as the eighteenth century there is a reference to "damascens, and other hard plumbs".¹ The material called "frieze" is from Friesland, the Dutch province (but the word "frieze" in the architectural sense is probably from the Latin *Phrygium (opus)*, Phrygian work, through the French *frise*). The kind of cloth known as "holland" is named from Holland, while "hollands" is gin made in the same country; "fustian" is probably from Fostat in Egypt; "gauze" is from Gaza in Palestine; "jean" is from Genoa; "muslin" is from Mosul in Mesopotamia; "poplin", the

¹ Nares, *Glossary*, I. 223.

French *pipeline* or *papeline*, was so called because it was made at Avignon, the seat of the Popes for a long time during the Middle Ages. The word "grogram" is from the French *grosgrain*, cloth of a coarse grain, and it is said that we derive "grog" from the fact that Admiral Vernon was nicknamed "Old Grog" from his grogram cloak, and that he made some change in the sailors' ration of rum.

If we describe the appearance of anyone as "spruce" we are etymologically saying that he is dressed as smartly as a Prussian, and "spruce-beer" similarly means Prussian beer. Chaucer says, in the *Knight's Tale* (2122), "And some woln have a Pruce sheeld or a targe", and the words "pruce" and "spruce" are often used in fifteenth-century wills, with the meaning Prussian, in forms like "a pruce kyste" and "a sprusse koffre". Holinshed describes two English gentlemen who were dressed in doublets of crimson velvet, and so forth, as "apparellled after the fashion of Prussia or Spruce".¹ A "cravat" is properly a scarf such as was worn by the Croats in the Thirty Years War. A "jersey" and a "guernsey" derive their names from the islands in the English Channel. But one of the most curious words among the names of wearing apparel is "knickerbocker". The word "knickerbocker" derives from Washington Irving's

¹ *Chronicle*, p. 805.

Diedrich Knickerbocker's History of New York, by way of Cruikshank's illustrations, which depicted that sort of nether garment. Thus the name of a Dutch family, settled on the other side of the Atlantic, and used by an American writer, whose book was illustrated by an English artist, has given us the name of a popular article of apparel.

Since wines are foreign products it is natural that many should have names derived from foreign places. "Champagne" is obviously from Champagne in France; "hock" is from Hochheim on the Main in Germany; "port" is from Oporto in Portugal; "sherry" is from Xeres in Spain (which, by the way, derives its name from Caesar); "madeira" is from the Madeira Islands, which were so called by the Portuguese because they were thickly wooded; the word goes back to the Latin *materia* (our word "matter") which had a secondary sense of timber.

Then the word "tariff" possibly derives from Tarifa in North Africa, whence the Moorish pirates sailed to plunder ships passing through the Straits of Gibraltar; it seems that vessels were allowed to pass on payment of blackmail—hence an enforced payment for the passage or entry of goods is a "tariff". So the word "arsenal", which came into English from the French, found its way into France from Italy, where it now has the form

arsenale. An earlier form, *arzand*, is used by Dante,¹ where he says:

"Quale nell' arzana de' Viniziani
bolle l'inverno la tenace pece
a rimpalmar li lor legni non sani,"

("As in the arsenal of the Venetians boils the sticky pitch in winter-time to caulk their unsound ships".) The word was brought into the language by the Genoese, first as *darsena*. (This form exists also in Spanish, and French has *darsine* in the sense of "dock".) The word is borrowed from the Moors. The Arabic *dar-sina* 'ah or *al-sina* 'ah means "house of construction" or "work-shop". The same source explains the name of the "Atarazanas" at Seville, founded by Alonzo the Wise.

There are many interesting words relating to the measures and weights used in trade. An "inch" derives its name in the same way as an "ounce". The Latin *uncia*, a twelfth part, became *once* in French and "ounce" in English, that is, the twelfth part of a pound, as it still is in Troy weight. It also became *ynce* in Anglo-Saxon and "inch" in modern English, that is, the twelfth part of a foot. A "foot" is simply the length of the human foot. An "ell" derives from the arm. The "elbow" (*ulna*) is the bow or bend of the *ell* or arm. The Platt Deutsch

¹ *Inferno*, xxi. 7.

has the parallel word *knebog*, the bow of the knee. We derive "ell" as a measure from the length of the forearm, exactly as "cubit" is from the Latin *cubitus*, the forearm (from *cubitare*, to recline). A "yard" is simply a stick or a pole for measuring, as it also means a pole across a ship's mast.

A "furlong" is a "furrow-long". The land used to be cultivated in long strips, with unploughed balks of turf between to separate them, for a long furrow was necessary, owing to the difficulty of turning, when eight oxen were yoked to the plough. These strips were two hundred and twenty yards long, and twenty-two yards wide (which, by the way, is the reason why the cricket pitch to-day is that length, because it was natural in a game to throw the ball across from ridge to ridge). The earliest English law that fixed the size of the statute acre, in the reign of Edward I, states that "forty perches in length and four in breadth make an acre", i.e. two hundred and twenty yards by twenty-two yards. In *The Winter's Tale* (I. 2. 95-96) Shakespeare uses "acre" as a measure of length equivalent to a furlong, with this long strip of ground in mind. A "perch", like a "yard", is originally a pole for measuring; we still call a rod on which fowls sit a "perch". A "mile" is a thousand (*mille*) paces. The small weight called a "drachm" or "dram" is from the Greek *drachmē*, which is from *drassomai*,

to grasp, and hence properly means a handful. A "pound" is from *pondus*, which simply means a weight. So a "stone" derives its name from the fact that a stone was used as a weight. A "ton" is the same word as "tun", and originally meant the weight of a full barrel.

Some of the names of coins, both ancient and modern, have also interesting sources. The "penny" probably owes its name to the fact that the Celtic word *pen* means "head", but this is doubtful. No half-pence were coined in England until about 1582, and in earlier days a "half-penny" was literally half of a silver penny. Hence half-pence were very small bits of metal, and so Leonato says, in *Much Ado About Nothing* (ii. 3): "O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence". The "farthing" obviously means the "fourthing", or fourth part, of a penny. The "shilling" is so called because it once bore the device of a shield (Anglo-Saxon, *scield*) exactly as the French *écu* and the Italian *scudo* are from the Latin *scutum*, shield. The "florin" was originally a coin of Florence, dating from the thirteenth century. It is recorded that in 1343 Edward III minted a gold coin of the value of six shillings and eightpence "and named it the *floryne*". So in *Piers the Plowman* (ii. 146), we read of money given to notaries to procure false testimony: "And feffe (i.e. fee) false witness with floreines

ynowe". The "crown" was so called because it had a crown stamped upon it. The "guinea" was first coined in 1663, of gold from Guinea in Africa. But the "pound" gets its name from the Latin *pondus*, weight, by way of the phrase *libra pondo*, a pound in weight, because a pound weight of silver was largely used as a unit of value. The French *livre* and the Italian *lira* both derive in a similar way from *libra*.

Some of the names of obsolete coins, known to the general reader through references in Shakespeare and our older literature, are rather interesting. The "angel", an old English gold coin worth about ten shillings, was so called because it bore the figure of the Archangel Michael conquering the dragon. The Prince of Morocco says in *The Merchant of Venice* (II. 7. 55-58):

"They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold."

There is some probability that the device of the angel was adopted with a reference to the old punning association between *angelus* and *Anglus*. The "tester" derived its name from a corruption of "teston" or "testoon", a word borrowed from the French. The teston was a silver coin struck by Louis XII, and called by that name because it had a head (Old French, *teste*) stamped upon it. In England testons

were first struck in the reign of Henry VIII. They bore the head of the king, and were apparently the first English coins to carry such a definite portrait. The teston was originally of the value of twelve pence, but later the coinage was debased, and the value was down to about sixpence in Shakespeare's day. In *Twelfth Night* (ii. 3. 32) Sir Andrew says to the clown: "Come on, there is a sixpence for you, let's have a song", and Sir Toby adds, "There's a testril of me too". The "groat" is literally the *great* coin, because there was no silver coin larger than the penny before the groat was minted in 1349. It was meant to be equal to four silver pennies. A "mark" was originally worth half a pound of silver, and probably got its name from bearing a mark, or stamp. Chaucer uses "mark" in the precise sense of "image" in *The Franklin's Tale* (879-880):

"Which mankinde is so fair part of Thy work
That Thou it madest lyk to Thyn owene *merk*."

The coin called a "pistole" probably derived its name, as the weapon called a "pistol" also did, in all likelihood, from Pistoia in Italy, once famous for metal work, and especially for guns. We owe our word "gazette" to the name of a small coin formerly current in Venice. Coryat says that when there was a great throng of people at St. Stephen's Church in that city, "If you will have a stoole it will cost

you a gazet, which is almost a penny".¹ Since the coin was the price of an early news sheet, the name of it became one of our names for a newspaper.

It used to be thought that the word "sterling" was derived from the "Easterlings", as the Flemish and German merchants were called, but the better opinion seems to be that it comes from the silver penny of the Norman kings, which was called a "sterling", probably because it was marked with a star. The present sense seems to have come by way of "a pound weight of sterlings" and so "a pound sterling". There has undoubtedly been some confusion with "Easterling". Stow, for instance, mentions "pence called *starlings*" in the year 1344, but he also mentions "the Easterling money", and says that "the easterling pence took their name of the Easterlings, which did first make this money in England, in the reign of Henry II". He says, too, that "some have said easterling money to take that name of a star, stamped in the border or ring of the penny".

¹ *Crudities*, II. 15.

VI

CONNECTIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

NOTHING illustrates the romance of speech better than the connections which exist between words, whether in the same language or in different languages, which look very unlike each other but mean the same thing, and, on the other hand, between words which have some likeness to each other, but have developed very diverse meanings. Compare, for example, our English word "tear", the Gothic *tagr*, the Greek *dakru*, and the Old Latin form *dacruma*, and it is evident that these are all closely related. But *dacruma* was superseded by the Sabine forms *lacruma* and *lacrima*, and here is the source of the French *larme*. So that *larme* and "tear", "lacrymose" and "tearful", are not only words which mean the same thing, but they are ultimately of the same origin, different as they look to the eye and sound to the ear.

Or think of the Latin word *dies* and the French word *jour*, which have not a single letter in common. Yet *jour* derives from *dies*, and the transition is *dies*, *diurnus*, *jornus*, *jorn*, *jor*, *jour*. Now English, like French, has borrowed direct from the Latin, but it has also borrowed from Latin through French,

and there are many instances where the same primary notion underlies a series of English words, some of which are developed from the native word, some from the Latin word, and some from the French word. Here is a case in point, in the Latin *dies*, the French *jour*, and the Saxon "day". We can speak of a "day-book", a "diary", and a "journal", which may be precisely the same thing, though we generally use "day-book" with a commercial reference, and "diary" and "journal" with a more personal connotation. But a "journal" may also mean a newspaper; it originally meant one which came out every day. Hence we have "journalist", or one who writes for a newspaper. Then a "journey" really means a day's travel, and a "journeyman" was originally one who worked by the day. Chaucer uses "journey" of a day's work in *The Romaunt of the Rose* (578-579), where he says that Idleness:

"whan she kempt was fetisly
And wel arayed and richely
Thanne had she doon al hir *journee*,"

but he also uses it in *The Knight's Tale* (2737-2738) of a day's march, where Duke Theseus:

"convoyed the kynges worthily
Out of his toun, a *journee* largely."

Then *dies* has not only given us "diary", or a record kept from day to day, but "Diet", the name of the

legislative assembly of the Holy Roman Empire in the Middle Ages: it means an assembly sitting day by day. Now we can speak of "the diary of a journalist" or of "Luther's journey to the Diet of Worms", of "a monthly journal" or of "a journeyman who works by the week", and since the etymology is usually out of mind we use the phrases without any feeling that we are repeating the notion of a *day* in the first pair of phrases, or contradicting it in the second pair.

There are many other familiar words in English which are intimately related, though we may not realize it until it is pointed out to us. Who would think that there was a close relation between the words "mealy-mouthed", "mellifluous", "mildew", and "molasses"? Mealy-mouthed was originally "mele-mouthed", or "honey-mouthed", and meant much the same as "mellifluous" (the Latin *mellifluus*, honey-flowing), being used of sweet and pleasant speech. From the sense of using sweet words, "mealy-mouthed" acquired the worse sense of being unwilling to speak a plain truth. Then "mildew" is really "honey-dew" (the Anglo-Saxon *meledēaw*, the first part of the word being akin to the Latin *mel*, honey) though a considerable difference in meaning has been developed. And "molasses" is from the Portuguese *melaço* and ultimately from the late Latin *mellaceus*, *mellaceum*, of the nature of honey.

Again, who would imagine that there was any connection in language between the very diverse notions of a frog, a buttercup, and a rankling sore? The Latin *rana*, *ranula*, frog (which is also the source of the French *grenouille*), gives us the botanical name *ranunculus* for a genus of plants including the buttercup and crowfoot; the Latin name is said to have been given because these plants grew in damp places where frogs were abundant, as *batrachion* is used in Greek of a similar kind of plant with a similar derivation, from *batrachos*, frog.¹ (The Italian name of the kingcup, by the way, is *batrachio*.) Our word "rankle" (formerly a noun, though now we use it only as a verb, "to rankle", or as an adjective, "rankling") probably derives from the use of the *ranunculus* type of plant by beggars in the past to produce artificial sores, and so to arouse pity.

What is the connection between the words when we speak of the "bellowing" of an animal, the ringing of a "bell", the striking of a "clock," and the wearing of a "cloak"? The word "bellow", used of the sound made by an animal, and to "bell", technically used of the cry of a stag, are clearly related, and probably a "bell" derives its name simply from the fact that it is a *sounding* instrument. Now the "clock" gets its name from the fact that it sounds the hours on a *bell* (French, *cloche*; German, *Glocke*,

¹ Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 25. 13. 109.

Low Latin, *clocca*, a bell). A "cloak" derives its name by a similar route, from the fact that it is a *bell-shaped garment*.

The English reader would scarcely imagine that there was any connection between the name of the disease called "shingles", the adjective in the phrase "a *succinct* statement", and the verb in the poet's line, "*Encinctured* with a twine of leaves". The Latin *cingere* means to gird, and *cingulum* and *cinctura* both mean a girdle or belt. The disease called shingles derives its name, which is a corruption of *cingulum*, from the fact that the eruptions often spread round the body like a belt, and engirdle it with sores, as Coleridge's visionary boy was engirdled with leaves. The Latin verb *succingere*, literally, to gird below, or to gird from below, meant "to tuck up your dress under your belt", and thus *succinctus* came to mean what is "tucked up into a little compass", short, small, compact, and so we have a *succinct* statement, or one that is brief and condensed.

What is the relation between a "map", a "napkin", and an "apron"? The Latin *mappa* means a cloth, and a "map" was originally painted on cloth. The Latin word became *nappe* in French—the one letter frequently changed into the other in the process of development from late Latin into French, and indeed there are examples of the

alternation in classical Latin. Our "napkin" is a diminutive of *nappe*, and means a little cloth. The French *napperon* derived from *nappe*, and gave us the English words "napery" and "napron", and then "a napron" became "an apron", because the first consonant of the word coalesced with the article.

There is plainly some connection between the first three words, though the relation is not so obvious between these and the words that follow, when we refer to the "Capitol" at Rome, the "decapitation" of a criminal, the "capitulation" of an army, a "chapter" of a book, the "chapter-house" of a cathedral, the "captain" of a ship, the *chef* of a famous hotel, the "chieftain" of a Highland clan, an "achievement" and a "handkerchief". What is the connection? The legend is that the Capitol at Rome derived its name from a portent. When the foundations were being dug a man's *head* (*caput*) was discovered, buried in the ground, yet as if freshly severed, which was regarded as a good omen for the future of Rome. So Andrew Marvell writes:

"A bleeding head, where they begun,
Did fright the architects to run;
And yet in that the state
Foresaw its happy fate."

Then to "decapitate" obviously means to behead. When an army "capitulates" it yields on certain

terms which are drawn up under different *heads*. A "chapter" (the French *chapitre*, from the Latin *capitulum*, a diminutive of *caput*) is a part of a book under a separate *heading*. A "chapter"-house is the building where the "chapter", the *head* clergy of the cathedral, meet together. The "captain" of a ship is the *head* officer of the vessel. The French *chef* is short for *chef de cuisine*, and a *chef* is a *head* cook. From *chef* we have our word "chief", and the Old French *chevetain* gives us "chieftain", the *head* of a tribe. Then "achieve" means to come to the *head*, in the sense of coming to the end, of an enterprise—*ad caput venire* has that sense in late Latin, and so the French phrase *venir à chef* arose; hence came *achever* with the meaning to finish, and so an "achievement" is the finishing of some undertaking. From *chef* again we have *couver-chef* (cover-head), and hence "kerchief". Thence we have "handkerchief", which is really "hand-cover-head", that is to say, a cloth originally meant to cover the *head*, which has now become a cloth held in the hand, when in use.

If a foreign *connoisseur*, secretly visiting a sale of pictures in London, wears a *quaint* disguise to preserve his *incognito*, what is the connection between the italicized words? The Latin *cognoscere*, *cognitum*, means to know, and the Old French *connoître* is derived from it; hence a "connoisseur" is a

"knower", especially one who is "knowing" in matters of art. From the Latin *incognitum*, unknown, the Italians have *incognito*, employed on any occasion when a person does not use his own name, and wishes to pass unknown and unnoticed. Our word "quaint" is from the Old French *cointe*, which is from the Latin *cognitus*, and means "known". (We derive "acquaint", by the way, from a related word in Old French, *acointier*, to make known.) From meaning "known" the word "quaint" comes to mean first notorious; then, unusual; and then, odd, queer, curious, whimsical.

Take the Latin words *quartus*, which means the fourth, and *quarta*, which means a fourth part. Hence our "quarter" of anything; a "quarter" of corn is the *fourth* of a hundredweight; a "quart" of milk is the *fourth* of a gallon; a "quarter"-staff was grasped at a point a *quarter* of the way down. In "quarter"-master and military "quarters" the use of the word seems to have derived either from dividing up (or "quartered", as you divide an animal into "quarters") parties of soldiers, in order to allocate them lodgings in different houses, or, more probably, from giving them a lodging in different "quarters" or parts of the town. To give "quarter" to an enemy meant at first, in all probability, to send him to your "quarters" as your prisoner, after sparing his life. A "quartern"-loaf was

originally made of a *quarter* of a stone of flour; a "quarto" is a book where the sheets of paper are folded into four, and so a page is a *quarter* of a sheet; a "quartette" is a musical composition in *four* parts; a "quartan" ague recurs on the *fourth* day; a "quadrille" is a dance in which *four* people take part; a "quadroon" (French, *quarteron*) is a person who has a *fourth* part of negro blood; a "quatrain" (from *quarte*) is a verse of *four* lines; "quaternions" is a calculus, or method of mathematical research, involving *four* independent quantities; and a "quarry" (in French *carrière*, in Old French *quarrière*, from the Low Latin *quadraria*, from *quadrus*, square, or having *four* corners) is a place where stones are squared. When Tennyson, in one of his vivid phrases in *A Dream of Fair Women*, writes of: "*Squadrons* and *squares* of men in brazen plates", the two words have the same source. The late Latin *exquadra* (from *quadrus*) became in Old French *esquerre*, whence our English word "square", and in Italian *squadra*, whence our English word "squadron". So we ultimately derive from a word that means *fourth* a number of different words relating to very diverse subjects of amusement, commerce, food, literature, mathematics, medicine, music, race, sport, and war.

It may be noted here that we have another word "quarry", in the sense of the animal that is being

hunted; this derives from a word in Old French which is either from the Low Latin *corata*, the entrails, because these parts were given to the hounds to eat, or from *cuir*, the skin, because they were put into the hide of the animal to be kept for the dogs.

Who would antecedently imagine a relation between a walking-“cane”, the “canons” of the Church, a battery of “cannon”, a Dutch “canal”, and a “canister” of tea? The Latin *canna* and the Greek *kanna* mean a reed; hence our word “cane”. Then *kanōn* means a reed used as a measuring rod, and then a rule in the sense of a regulation, exactly as we use “rule” both of a carpenter’s measure and of a standard of conduct; hence the ecclesiastical “canons”, or regulations of the Church. But as a cane is hollow *canna* comes to mean a tube, and eventually the iron tube of a gun; hence “cannon”. Then, by a natural derivation from *canna* in the sense of a pipe, *canalis* means a groove, a channel; hence “canal”. Then the Greek *kanustron* means a reed basket, and the Latin *canistra* means wicker-work and baskets for various uses, and so we get “canister” in the sense of a case for holding tea and other things, though now it is generally made of tin.

What is the connection between “vermin”, “vermilion”, “vermicelli”, and a “worm”? Our “worm” is the Latin *vermis*; the words are cognate.

From the French *vermine* we have the word “vermin,” which, from meaning worms, has come to mean noxious animals generally, especially those which are small. “Vermilion” is through the French *vermillon* from *vermiculus*, a diminutive of *vermis*, and the colour is so called because derived from an insect, the cochineal. “Vermicelli” means little worms, because the paste is made in little threads like worms.

What link is there between the “Pomfret” cakes beloved of children, the “pontoon” of a military engineer, and anything “pontifical”? The Latin word for bridge is *pons*, *pontis*, and the town in Yorkshire where liquorice cakes are made, popularly called Pomfret, and properly Pontefract, is said to derive its name from the fact that there was a broken bridge there (*Ad Pontem Fractum*). The Roman bridge over the Aire, where it is crossed by the Roman road, must have remained in a state of ruin for generations, or the name would never have got established. It is one of the very few instances in which an English place-name is purely Latin. A pontoon (in French *ponton*) is a flat-bottomed boat used in war for bridging rivers and making a passage for an army. The building of bridges was associated with the priesthood in ancient Rome, and the principal priest bore the title of *pontifex maximus*, or “greatest bridge-builder”. This passed on (with

much else) to the Bishop of Rome, when Christianity prevailed, and to-day the Pope is the supreme Pontiff. So "pontifical" has come to carry the sense of what is authoritative in the Roman Church, and also the worse sense of a pompous assumption of authority in the manner or utterance of anyone.

We have all of us, at one time or another, encountered a girl called "Amy", an "amiable" character, an "amatory" person, and an "amateur" player. These words all derive from the one Latin word that Fra Lippo Lippi knew—"Flower o' the clove, All the Latin I construe is, *Amo*, I love!" From *amo* we have *amicus*, a friend, or one that we love (hence the French *ami*), and *amicabilis*, friendly (hence the French *amiable*), and *amator*, a lover. The name *Amy* means "friend", or someone that we love, an *amiable* character is a lovable character, an *amatory* person is a person much given to love, and an *amateur* player is one who plays for love of the game, and not for money, like a professional.

The words "doctor", "doctrine", "document", and "docile" are all ultimately from the Latin *docere*, to teach. When a student at a mediaeval university went on from the Master's to the Doctor's degree, it meant that he was then authorized to teach. In later days the doctorate (in almost all the faculties) became only a formal or an honorary degree and was rarely taken, but in medicine it was retained,

and many physicians took the degree. Now comparatively few do, but we still call a medical man a "doctor". The word "doctrine" means teaching, especially the teaching of the Church. The word *documentum* really meant at first a lesson, or an example or a proof given in teaching, which was frequently written down, and so "document" came to mean a writing. The word "docile" means teachable.

There is an obvious verbal connection between an "advent", what is "adventurous," and what is "adventitious", different as is the meaning of the words. An "advent" (*adventus*, from *advenire*) is a *coming*. An "adventure" (*adventura*, from *advenire*) is some strange event which *comes* to pass. What is "adventitious" (*adventicius*) is properly that which *comes* to anything from without, and is therefore foreign; hence we derive the sense (in which the word is generally used) of what is not really essential to the matter *in hand*. We get a number of other words from the same Latin root. Thus "prevent" means to *come before*, and so to get in the way of, to hinder, to stop; and "invent" means to *come upon*, and so to discover, and then to devise; and "convenient" means what *comes together*, and so is ready to hand, and useful; and a "subvention" is what *comes under*, and so supports, like some grant by the Government for the help of a distressed industry.

There is a real link between all the words when we speak of a ship reaching "harbour"; a person "harbouring" a criminal or a design; a "harbinger" (a word used only in verse, as when a poet calls the lark "the harbinger of spring"); an *auberge* in France, or an *albergo* in Italy, or a *Herberge* in Germany; to "harry" a country; a "herald" making a proclamation; the personal name "Harold"; and an *arrière-ban*. The Anglo-Saxon *herebeorg* means "army-shelter" or "army-station" (the word *herberge* is used in the *Chanson de Roland* in the sense of a military station) as the German *Heer* still means army, and as our *borough*, *burgh*, is akin to the German *bergen*, to hide or protect. Hence "harbour" as a place of shelter for a ship, and to "harbour" in the sense of giving shelter to a fugitive, and so of sheltering a thought in the mind, and pondering over it, as against casting it out into the cold. A "harbinger" is in earlier English a *herbergeur*, or one who goes before a monarch or an army to arrange quarters; so the lark is a harbinger of spring in the sense of preceding the advent of vernal days. The name for an inn in French, Italian, and German is derived from the same root as "harbour". Then from the word which forms the first part of all these other words, the Anglo-Saxon *here*, army, we have the word "harry", meaning to ravage; to "harry" (Anglo-Saxon *hergean*) is, in its first

meaning, simply to make war. A "herald" is an army-leader (in Old High German *hariwali*), and therefore one who stands in front of the host and makes a proclamation; the word is the same as the Christian name "Harold". The *arrière-ban* was a proclamation by the Kings of France which summoned not only their immediate feudatories to war, but also the vassals of those feudatories. The word has been assimilated to *arrière*, behind, as if it meant a summons that reached those behind the greater vassals of the King, but it is really the same word as the German *Heerban*, army-proclamation.

What is the relation between a "cockerel", a "cocker"-spaniel, wearing a "cockade", behaving like a "coxcomb", "cocking" a gun, turning a stop—"cock", drinking a "cock"-tail, eating "cockaleekie", and "coquetting" with a lady or with an idea? The word "cockerel" is a diminutive of cock, from the late Latin *coccus*; the word probably derives from the cry of the bird (like "cock-a-doodle-doo", and also "cockatoo", which is from the Malay *kakatua*). A "cocker"-spaniel is so called because the dog used to be trained to start wood-cock. A "cockade" (French, *coquarde*, from *coq*) is a badge worn on the hat, so called from its likeness to a cock's comb. The word "coxcomb", for a fop or a fool, is derived from the traditional dress of the fool in the old comedy, with a cap made like a *cock's* head.

The trigger of a gun was thought to resemble a *cock's* head, and so was any kind of tap; hence we "cock" a gun, and speak of a stop—"cock"; the Germans similarly call a spigot a *Fasshahn*. A "cocktail" probably gets its name from the supposed effect of making you "cock up your tail", as a *cock* does when it struts about, with the implied sense of making you feel frisky. The Scottish dish called "cockaleekie" is made of a *cock* boiled with leeks. A diminutive of *cog* gives us the French *coquet*, and then a feminine form of it, *coquette*; it seems to derive its meaning from strutting about like a *cock*, to attract admiration, and so, by way of the suggestion of vanity, it gains the meaning of a flirt.

It is fairly plain that there is some connection between the "cook" in the kitchen, a group of conspirators "concocting" a plot, and a "decoction" of some drug, but how are these words related to those we use when we speak of a "precocious" genius, and of eating an "apricot" or a biscuit"? The word "cook" derives in English (Anglo-Saxon, *cōc*) as *Koch* does in German, and *cog* in French (which, oddly enough, is only in use in the navy) from the Latin *coquus*, a cook, which is from *coquere*, to boil, bake, roast, cook. The word "concoct" is from the Latin *concoquere*, *concoctum*, to boil or cook along with something else, and hence to put together and prepare carefully; so we speak of

"concocting" a scheme or "concocting" an excuse. Similarly "decoct" is from *decoquere*, *decoctum*, to boil down, and so make an essence or extract of anything. Then "precocious" is the Latin *praecox*, *praecocis*, and means that which blossoms or ripens early, but it derives from *praecoquere*, to boil or cook beforehand. "Apricot" derives, by a devious route, from the same word; the name of the fruit really means "the early ripe". And our word "biscuit", which comes to us through the French, is from *bis* and *coccus*, and refers to soldiers' bread, "twice cooked", or baked twice over, and thus so hard that it will keep on a campaign.

Obviously there is a connection between the *fasces* carried by a Roman lictor, the "fascines" used by military engineers, and the "Fascist" rule in Italy. The word *fascia* meant a fillet, or a long, narrow strip of cloth for binding round anything. The *fasces* were a bundle of rods with an axe in the middle carried by the lictors before the chief magistrates, and the word is related to *fascia* as our "bundle" is related to "band" and "bond"—something *bound* together. Then *fascina* meant a bundle of brushwood, and such a bundle was called a *fascine* in French military language. These bundles of faggots were used for filling up a ditch, raising a battery, and so on. Then the Italian *fascio* means a bundle, or group, and so a union, and the

Fascists are really so called as members of a political union.

As these examples show, there is a constant development of new meanings in words as long as a language is alive. New forms of old words are developed, and new meanings and new uses of existing words are evolved, which sometimes oust the old significance and the old usage. This can be illustrated in almost every department of speech. Think, for example, of a few words that derive from notions connected with games and sport.

The Greek word *agōn* means an assembly, and particularly an assembly gathered to see the national games of Greece; it derives from *agein*, which means to lead, possibly because an assembly consists of many people who have been led together. From *agōn* derives the word *agōnia*, a contest before a great assembly, a struggle for the victory in the games. This develops a secondary sense of anguish, as if the body or the mind were under a painful stress, like an athlete strained to the utmost—this is our word “agony”, used of any intense pain of body or mind. One may add that from the above word *agein*, and *pais*, *paidos*, the Greeks compounded the word *paidagōgos*, “a boy-leader”, originally the slave who accompanied a boy to school and back again, and then a tutor, a teacher, a “pedagogue”.

The Latin *ludus*, a game, a play, gives us “pre-

lude" (*praeludium*), what comes before the play, hence a short piece of music, or anything in the way of a preface. The same source gives us "ludicrous" (*ludicus*, sportive, jocular) much as we use "gamesome" in the sense of jovial. Hence also we have "allude" (*alludere*), which is first to play with, then to joke or jest, and then merely to mention in a slight manner. The same word, again, is the source of "delude" (*deludere*), which is really to play upon, and so deceive, and of "collusion" (*colludere*, *collusio*), which is a playing together, or playing into one another's hand, as we say, and so a plot.

Our word "chance" is through the Old French *chéance*, from the Latin *cadentia* (from *cadere*, to fall), originally in the sense of that which falls out fortunately; the Latin word was used of playing dice. The word "cadence" is from the same source, through the Italian *cadenza*. The musical sense is as natural as the other, as the Duke's words in *Twelfth Night* (I. i. 4-7) are alone enough to suggest:

"That strain again! it had a dying fall;
O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing, and giving odour!"

A word related to *cadere* has given us a number of words which have developed widely different senses. We read in the newspaper of motor "acci-

dents", and mediaeval logicians write of "accidents" in contrast with substance. There is also a branch of grammar known as "accidence". The words are from the Latin *accidere*, to happen, which is from *cadere*, to fall. An "accident" in the first sense is something (generally unfortunate) which happens, or, as we say, "falls out", and so Othello spoke of "moving accidents by flood and field". In the second sense an "accident" is some attribute, like a colour, which is not essential, and which may "fall off", leaving the substance of the thing unchanged, as a leaf is a leaf alike when it is green in the spring, and when it is brown in the autumn. Then "accidence" in grammar treats of the inflections of words, and is so called because these are "accidents", and do not alter the substance of the word; the stem of the word, like *walk*, is essential, but the inflectional changes, like *walks*, *walking*, *walked*, are not essential, but accidental. The mediaeval theologians seized upon this logical distinction between the essence and the accidents, and used it to explain the miracle of Transubstantiation. The Catholic believes that the "accidents" of bread and wine remain in the consecrated elements, that is, the appearance, taste, and so forth; but that the underlying substance is really changed into the body and blood of Christ.

Here we may consider the development of some

words relating to religion. The Greek *eleēmosunē* means pity, and, in a secondary sense, the giving of charitable gifts. In Acts iii. 2, we read that the blind man was laid at the gate of the Temple "to ask alms" (*aiτεῖν ἐλεημοσύνην*) of those who went in. Like so many other Greek words connected with religion, the word passed into Latin. Tertullian uses *eleemo* in the sense of alms. The word became in German *Almosen* and in French *aumône*, and (through the Anglo-Saxon *aelmesse*) in English "alms". (It is possible that some forms of the word have been influenced by the Latin *alimonia*, nutriment or maintenance, which we have in English in the legal word "alimony", the allowance for her support made to a wife who has been legally separated from her husband.)

Take the Greek *logos*, which means word, discourse, reason, and think of the words in English derived from it. We speak of "the Logos doctrine", because of the great passage in John i. 1, where the Apostle declares that "the Word (*Logos*) was with God, and the Word was God". We call the art of reasoning "logic", and therefore use words such as "logical" and "illogical". We call an excuse or a defence an "apology", and therefore use words like "apologize" and "apologetic"; moreover, we call some of the early defenders of Christianity the "Apologists", and the branch of theology which is

concerned with the defence of religion "apologetics", and hence use "apologetic" as in the phrase "an apologetic bias", with the sense of what is not disinterested. We call a likeness an "analogy", and hence speak of what is "analogous". We speak of an "apologue", a "prologue", an "epilogue", a "monologue", a "dialogue", and of all the numberless -ologies, like "biology", (*bios*, life), and "geology" (*gē*, the earth), and "theology" (*theos*, God), and the rest, and there are nouns and adjectives, and other words derived from all these (like "theologian", "theologue", "theological", for example, from the last). There must be hundreds of words in English that derive from the one Greek word *logos*.

It is amazing to note the number of different words which have been developed out of some simple notions, and the different senses in which they are used. Our word "twist" is related to "two" and "twine", and we use it not only as a verb, in the sense of turning round, or turning one thing round another, but as a noun, for a roll of tobacco. Then from the Latin *torquere*, *tortum*, to twist, and some related words, we have the technical term "torsion" for the force with which anything tends to return when *twisted*; and "tortuous" (*tortuosus*), used either literally or metaphorically of a *twisted* or winding course; and "torch" (the French *torche*, from *torcher*, from *tortiare*, from *tortus*), because a torch

was originally made of *twisted* strands of tow dipped in pitch; and "torture" (*tortura*) and "torment" (*tormentum* for *torquementum*), which *twists* the body with pain; and "tortoise", the animal probably being so called from the *twisted* appearance of the limbs; and "tort", a legal word meaning an injury remediable by an action for damages, with the original sense of a *twisting* of equity; and "extort", to *twist* out of anyone who is reluctant to confess or to give; and "distort", to *twist* asunder and so disfigure or misrepresent; and also "retort", in both senses of the word—a smart "retort" is a reply in the sense of some remark sharply *twisted* round and returned upon the speaker, and a chemist's "retort" is a glass vessel with the neck turned or *twisted* back. Now here are words which must be employed at least by every chemist, engineer, historian, lawyer, tobacconist, and zoologist, to say nothing of the practical and ethical words and uses of words which must be employed by every one of us, all developed out of the simple act of twisting.

It is not a very long way from turning and twisting anything to breaking it. Think of the Latin *frangere*, *fractum*, to break, and the words we have derived from it. A "fracture" is the point where anything is *broken*; a "fraction" is a part of a unit that has been *broken* up; a "fragment" is what is *broken*

off; what is "fragile" (*fragilis*, from the same root as *frangere*, *fractum*) is easily *broken*; "frail" means the same thing (and is derived, through the French, from *fragilis*); an "infraction" of a rule is the *breaking* of it; "diffraction" is a *breaking apart*, and "refraction" is a *breaking back*—both words are used of changes undergone by light; "refractory" is what *breaks back* from a right course of conduct, and is therefore perverse in character, or, as applied to a material, what *breaks back* from, or resists, an effort to fuse it, or treat it in some other way.

A purely English word does not generally lend itself to this kind of differentiation to the same extent as a Latin word, but there are some examples where we get a number of separate uses and diverse meanings out of a single native word. Our word "deal", for example, is the Anglo-Saxon *daelan*, and originally means to divide. Now to "deal" with anyone in the way of business is to *divide* goods or money with him; to "deal" with people according to their deserts is to *divide* to them their proper share of good treatment or otherwise; to "deal" cards is to *divide* the pack; a "deal" board is a piece of wood that has been *divided*; a "dale" is a valley which *divides* two tracts of higher ground; and "a great deal" is a large share or *division* of anything.

Apart from these natural and metaphorical exten-

sions of meaning deriving from the original root, there are many words which have gradually acquired a stronger or a slighter sense than they had in earlier times, and thence some have developed quite a new meaning, for better or for worse. Many words now used with a sense of contempt or blame were originally innocent enough. Thus a "boor" meant originally a farmer, as the German *Bauer* and the South African Dutch *Boer* still do; now it means a rude person. A "churl" is the Anglo-Saxon *ceorl*, which at first meant simply a man, and later a countryman; now it means a person of sullen temper. The word "villain" is from the Old French *vilain*, peasant, which meant a serf attached to a *ville* (the Latin *villa*, a country estate). As late as Marlowe we have a phrase like "far from villany or servitude". From meaning a serf, a slave, the word "villain" has come to mean a rogue, a wicked wretch. So the Latin *captivus* became the French *chéfif*, which still meant a captive, in the Middle Ages; then, from meaning a serf, a slave who could not resist his oppressor, it came to mean puny, feeble, wretched. That is the source of our word "caitiff", which has further degenerated until it indicates a mean wretch in the moral sense, while our word "captive", in the original sense of a prisoner, has come direct from the Latin *captivus*. Similarly the French *vaslet* or young vassal (now

degraded into *valet*) gave us “varlet”, originally a page, but now a scoundrel.

Take the two words “knaves” and “knight”. The first is from the Anglo-Saxon *cnafa*, the second from the Anglo-Saxon *cniht*: both mean boy, or servant, and both have retained that meaning in the German *Knabe* and *Knecht*. In Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (iv. iii. 240–241) Brutus says to Lucius, with marked affection:

“What, thou speaks’t drowsily?
Poor *knaves*, I blame thee not, thou art o’erwatch’d,”

and again (269–270):

“Gentle *knaves*, good night;
I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee.”

The word “knaves” has got its present sense from the real or supposed dishonesty of servants. While the meaning of “knaves” has been debased until it means a mere scoundrel, the meaning of “knight” has been exalted until it means a member of an order of chivalry.

“Genteel” has come to suggest an affectation of good breeding, but it is really the same word as “gentle”, in the sense of well-bred (Latin, *gentilis*, belonging to a *gens*, or clan). The word “gentle” has derived the meaning of mild and amiable from the earlier sense of well-born and well-bred. The

contemptuous "oaf" is the same word as "ouph" and "elf". In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (iv. 4. 47-49), Mistress Page says:

"my little son
And three or four more of their growth we'll dress
As urchins, *ouphes*, and fairies."

But while "elf" has remained as the name of a fairy, "oaf" has degenerated until it means a doit, as when Kipling calls cricketers and footballers respectively "flannelled fools" and "muddied oafs". The word "daft" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *gedaefte*, which means meek, and the word "silly" originally meant blessed (the Anglo-Saxon *sælig*) as the German "selig" still does. In Chaucer it means humble, innocent, simple, and so generally in Shakespeare. So, too, in Milton, *On the Nativity* (91-92), where he writes of the shepherds:

"Perhaps their loves or else their sheep
Was all that did their *silly* thoughts so busy keep."

Then from meaning "simple" the word came to mean "simple-minded", foolish. So "ninnny" is a familiar form of "innocent". It is rather a pathetic commentary on human nature that so many words that had an original meaning of goodness have come to carry a sense of foolishness. The word "fond" originally means foolish, as it still does in northern

dialect. "Fon" is used by Chaucer for a fool. Then "fonned" is foolish, as in Wiclit's version of 1 Cor. i. 27, where "the foolish things of the world" is rendered "tho thingis that ben *fonned*." The present sense has arisen from the notion of a "fond" or foolish doting on someone, and so a "fondness" for them.

VII

METAPHORS

It has been said that every language is a dictionary of faded metaphors, and nothing is more true of human speech. It is instructive to take a word in Latin, for example, which expresses some simple idea, and then to note the numerous words in English that have come from it, with many wide developments of meaning, many of which are metaphorical. Thus the Latin *ponere*, *positum*, means to place. Hence we have "position", the way that anything is *placed*; and "disposition", which may mean either the order in which things are *placed*, "the disposition of his property", or the way that a man's nature is *placed*, with a bent toward either good or evil, either happiness or melancholy, "the disposition of his mind"; and "deposit", or money *placed* down and left as a pledge; and "deposition", or what is *placed* down as the evidence of a witness, or, in the other sense of the word, the *placing* down of someone from a higher position, like the de-thronement of a monarch; and "apposition", or the *placing* of things together; and "opposition", or the *placing* of things over against each other; and "positive", what is definitely *placed* or put down as a

statement of fact; and “*posit*”, to *place* or lay down in the course of argument; and “*post*” in all its many senses—a wooden “*post*” *placed* in the ground; a military “*post*”, or *place* to be held in fighting; an official or commercial “*post*” or *place* of authority; a “*post*” or stage at some *place* on the road, whence we have “posting”-houses, and “*post*”-horses, and the “Post” Office, which carries our letters from stage to stage, and “*postage*”, or what we pay for our letters being carried. Then from a Low Latin form of the same word, which appears in French as *poser*, we have many words like “*pose*”, to *place* in position for an artist, or to *place* oneself in a set attitude; and “*posture*”, or the way that anything is *placed*; and “*impose*”, or *place* upon, like a burden; and “*repose*”, or *place* back, so as to be able to rest; and “*suppose*”, or *place* under as a presumption that lies beneath what else you think; and “*expose*”, or *place* out, and so shew up; and “*compose*”, or *place* together, and so arrange. Then from the present stem of the same Latin verb we have words like “*deponent*”, one who *deposes*, and “*exponent*”, one who *expounds*, and “*opponent*”, one who *opposes*. Here are words which are used every day in speaking of matters connected with art, commerce, grammar, law, logic, music, photography, politics, travel, and war, which are really all metaphorical extensions of a word that means “to place”.

Think again of the metaphorical uses of words we derive from the notion of weighing anything. We speak of "weighing" in our mind some doubtful issue. If we use another word, and say that we "ponder" over it, we are employing precisely the same metaphor, for "ponder" is ultimately from the Latin *pondus*, weight. If we choose still another word, and say that we will "deliberate" upon it, we are once more using the same metaphor, for the word "deliberate" comes from the same root as the Latin *libra*, scales. Then the Latin word *examen* means the needle of a balance, and our "examine" and "examination" involve the same implicit metaphor of weighing in a balance. Then the Latin *pensare*, which means to weigh, and so to consider in the mind, has given the French the words *penser*, *pensée*, *penseur*, *pensif*, and the last of these has given us "pensive", which from meaning thoughtful has come to mean sad. We have also from these sources words like "compensate", which means to weigh together, and "compendium", which means what is weighed together, and "ponderous", what weighs heavily, and "preponderate", to weigh down. Or think of the metaphorical uses derived from the simple act of twisting together, which is the first thing done in making thread for weaving. When we use the word "simplicity" we are really speaking of "singleness of texture", and so of what is single-

minded and single-hearted (though the word has later acquired the worse sense of "foolishness"), for the Latin *simplex*, *simplicitas*, is from *semel*, once, and *plicare*, to fold, and means "of one fold". So "duplicity" means "twofoldness", and has acquired the moral sense of deceitfulness; and "triplex" means "three-fold", and "complex" means "folded together", and "multiplex" means "many-fold". Our English word "twine" really means *two* threads twisted together (as "twin" means one of *two* children born at the same time, and as "twain" means *two* of anything). So "twill" and "tweed" have some connection with a use of *two* threads in weaving, and so has the word "twist".

Or think of the many senses of words developed out of the notion of a point. The "acme" of perfection, or of anything else, is the highest point (Greek, *akmē*) of it; *akē* means a point, and *akros* the top, and the "Acropolis" (*Akropolis*) is the highest point of the city of Athens. An "acrobat" is etymologically one who walks on tiptoe; the word is from the Greek *akrobatein* (from *akros* and *bainō*), to go on the point, i.e. the point of the toes. The same root appears in the Latin *acuere*, to make pointed or sharp, and *acere*, to be sour, or sharp to the taste, and hence we have "acumen", which is sharpness or quickness of apprehension; and "acute", which is keen, shrewd, or sharp; and "acerbity", which is sharpness

or sourness of taste or disposition; and the chemists' words "acetic", which means sharp or sour, and "acid", which means a sharp or sour substance; and "ague", the French *aigu*, from *acutus*, which is a periodical fever accompanied by sharp fits of chilliness and pain; and, one may add, the French *aiguille*, needle, which is also used of the spire, or sharp point, of a church tower or of a mountain peak.

We speak of "charging" a person before the magistrates with a legal offence, and of "charging" a battery with electricity; of a "charge" given to a minister at his ordination, and of a cavalry "charge" in battle; of a person being in "charge" of an institution, and of "charging" the cost of something to our account; of a "charger" in the sense of a war-horse, or in the archaic sense of a large dish, as when the daughter of Herodias said, "Give me here in a *charger* the head of John the Baptist" (where the Greek word means a wooden trencher). That is to say, we use the word "charge", or some form of it, in the sense of accusing, filling, exhorting, and attacking, and also of a responsibility, of a payment, of a horse, and of a platter. Who would imagine that behind this word, in all its very divergent senses, there is the implicit metaphor of *loading a waggon*? But so it is. The Latin word *carrus*, a waggon, or some Celtic word closely akin to it, is

the source of our word "car", which is in wide use not only in poetry, as when Milton writes of "the gilded car of day", but also in familiar references to a "tramcar" and a "motor-car". From *carrus* was derived the verb *carricare* to load a waggon. St. Jerome uses *carricare* in the sense of "load". The word became in Old French *carcare* and then *charger*. Hence all the later meanings. A "charger" was originally a horse that was loaded with a burden, then it acquired the sense of "war-horse", and to "charge" the enemy in battle is derived from the thought of the forward rush of the mounted warriors' horses. The other sense of "charger" is that of a large dish that is loaded with food. All the other senses of the word "charge" are extensions of the notion of loading or filling, as you load a gun with powder and shot, and lay a load of responsibility or blame upon someone, either by way of putting him in command of some post, or accusing him of some offence, or exhorting him to fidelity in his task, or making him answerable for a payment of money. It may be added that "cargo"—a Spanish word, but from the same ultimate source—obviously means the load carried by a ship.

It is noticeable that many of the words that express emotions of surprise, dislike, and fear, and the corresponding actions, are really vivid metaphors, and it is very natural that they should be. The word

"astonish" is, through the Old French *estoner*, from the late Latin *extonare* (*tonare*, to thunder), and to be "astonished" is exactly the same thing as we express with Saxon simplicity when we say that we are "thunderstruck". The Latin *extonare* became "astone", "astoun", "astound", and from a participial form, "astoned", a new verb was developed, "astony", which became "astonish". The name of the disease called "apoplexy" belongs to the same class, for the Greek *apoplexia* is from *plessein*, to strike, and evidently means planet-struck. The Latin equivalent, *sideratio*, means the same thing.

It is an old and widespread belief that the moon is the cause of madness. The Greek word for moon is *selēnē*, and the verb *selēniazesthai*, to be moon-struck, is used in Matt. iv. 24 ("They brought unto Him those which were lunatic") and Matt. xvii. 15 ("Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic"). Sir John Cheke, in his quaint version of the New Testament, uses "moond" in the latter passage, and it is, of course, an exact verbal equivalent both of the *σεληνιαζόμενος* of the Greek Testament, and of the "lunatic" (from *luna*, the moon) of the Authorised Version, though what is really meant in the Gospel is probably epilepsy and not lunacy.

The history of "amaze" is not very clear, but it certainly has some sense of madness, or being "mazed", as people still say in English dialects;

and it is possible that a "maze", in the sense of a labyrinth, derives from the notion of anyone wandering about aimlessly when in a "maze" or state of mental muddle. To be "afraid" is to be "affrayed", which really means to be frozen with fright (the French *effrayer*, in Old French *esfroyer*, and ultimately the Low Latin *exfrigidare*, to freeze). "Aghast" is related to "ghastly" and "ghost", and apparently to "gaze", with some sense of gazing fixedly upon an awful sight.

Our word "crazy" originally meant "cracked", and therefore defective. Shakespeare uses it in this sense in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (I. i. 91-92), where Demetrius says:

"Relent, sweet Hermia, and Lysander, yield,
Thy crazèd title to my certain right."

"Fool" is the Latin *follis*, bellows, wind-bag (through the Old French *fol*), either with an obscene reference, or more probably from a grimace made by puffing out the cheeks, in which sense the word is used by Juvenal:

"*Tunc immensa cavi spirant mendacia folles*
*Conspuiturque sinus.*¹

The word "insane" means unsound in mind (*insanus*), and our native word "mad" is probably from the

¹ *Satires*, VII. 111-112.

Anglo-Saxon root that means hurt or weakened. "Demented" is the Latin *demens, dementis*, out of one's mind (*mens*). It is rather a striking fact that many words which signify extreme emotion have a primary meaning of being carried out of oneself.

"Ecstasy" (the Greek *ekstasis*) is literally "a standing out". "Transport" is obviously the Latin *transportare*, to carry beyond, and indeed we use it not only of rapture, but of road and railway "transport". "Rapture" is the Latin *rapere, raptum*, to seize, to snatch, in the earlier sense of being snatched up into the bliss of heaven. On the other hand, "enthusiasm" is from *en* and *theos*, and means "possessed by a god". So does "giddy" (the Anglo-Saxon *gydig*) in its original sense, but it has strangely degenerated into its present double sense, physical and moral, and has come to mean, in the one reference, reeling, and, in the other, heedless.

Several words that mean decay or weakness are in their origin vivid metaphors. Thus the word "dilapidated" derives from *di*, asunder, and *lapis*, a stone, and properly means the ruined state of a *stone* building. But it is now used in all sorts of other ways, and we read of a "dilapidated" volume, and a "dilapidated" garment, and a "dilapidated" reputation, though most scholars would still hesitate at such a use of the word, with the feeling that the derivation is too obvious. "Decrepit", from the

Latin *decrepitus*, is ultimately from *crepare*, to creak, to rattle, and has the sense of old and weak from the suggestion of silence, as if it meant what was too much worn out to make any noise! The word "feeble" is from the Latin *flebilis*, pitiable, which is from *fleere*, to weep. *Flebilis* passed into Old French, with the loss of the second consonant, as *foible* (it is now *faible*), and thence into English as "feeble", and from meaning pitiable has come to mean weak. "Foible" is the same word, in the sense of a weak point in one's character. "Futile" is from the Latin *futilis*, which etymologically means "easily poured out" (*fundere*, to pour), hence unstable, unreliable, transient, worthless. Another word from the region of the wine-cellar is "fusty", which means "smelling of the cask"; it is from the Old French *fuste*, cask. The Latin *fustis* means a piece of wood, a cudgel, a staff, and the French word seems to have derived by way of a similar use to our "drawn from the wood", by which "the wood" has come to mean "the barrel".

Many words which express the notion of something pleasing or unpleasing are also originally striking metaphors. Thus to "insult" is literally to jump at; it is ultimately from *salire*, to leap. The word "salient" derives from the same source, through the French *saillir*, to jut out, and so "the Ypres salient" was a part of the line of trenches

which stuck out toward the enemy's ground, and "the salient point" in an argument or a speech is that which leaps out before the eyes as the most important. A "sally", whether it is a sally of wit or the sally of a besieged garrison, is a sudden leaping forth, either of a witty remark or of the harassed defenders. Another word which has the original idea of leaping is "desultory", which derives from *desultor*, the name of the performer who leaped from one horse to another in the Roman circus. We may add that our English word "spring", from the Anglo-Saxon *springan*, which also means first of all to leap, is applied to a place where water springs or leaps out of the ground, and to the early part of the year when vegetation is springing or leaping up from the earth, and so we have a "spring" of water and the "spring" of the year.

Many words derive from bodily actions which suggest a metaphorical sense. Thus to be "alert" is really to be erect, and so ready for action (Italian, *all'erta*, on the upright). "Succour" is through the Old French from the Latin *succurrere*, to run under, and so to support and help. To "flatter" is really to smooth out, to stroke down, from the same root we have in "flat". The word "glad" has much the same source; it is akin to the German *glatt*, the Dutch *glad*, and the Latin *glaber*, which all mean smooth. On the other hand, "chagrin" (which is

the same word as "shagreen", from a Turkish word meaning the back of a horse or ass) has developed the sense of vexation from the other meaning of roughened leather, by the same kind of suggestion which we have in "goose-flesh" (and in "gruesome", which is from an old English word still found in dialect, "grue", to shudder). From a shuddering repulsion which makes our flesh creep has come the sense of a mood of annoyance. So "horrible" and "horrid" and "horror" are from *horrere*, to bristle, to make the hair stand on end. Shakespeare uses "horrid" in that sense when he makes Macbeth say (I. 3. 134-135):

"Why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair?"

But if you are "supercilious", it merely means that you raise your eyebrows (*supercilium*, eyebrow) in disdain!

"Thrill" means first of all to *bore*, or pierce; we have the word in "nostril", which was formerly "nose-thrill" or "nose-thirle", the boring of the nose. Chaucer says, in describing the appearance of the Miller (*Prologue*, 557): "His nosethirles blake were and wyde". The name of the boring tool called a "drill" is related to "thirle" and "thrill". In *Piers the Plowman* (I. 171-172) it is said that our Lord grants mercy: "To hem that

hongen him on heigh · and his herte *thirled*", i.e. To them that hanged him on high and pierced his heart. We are "thrilled" when we are *pierced through* with a sensation of wonder or of joy. So a "thrall" was a servant whose ear had been *thrilled*, drilled or bored, in token of bondage. In Exodus xxi. 6, it is commanded that if the bondservant refuses to go free at the end of six years' term, "His master shall bring him to the door, or unto the door-post, and his master shall *bore his ear through* with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever", where an old English version reads "He shall *thirle his eare mid anum aeles*".

To "fret" is to be *eaten up* with grief or anxiety. The word is the Anglo-Saxon *fretan*, to gnaw (which is really *for-stan*, to eat up), akin to the German *fressen*. The literal sense is retained in the Prayer Book version of Psalm xxxix. 12: "When Thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, Thou makest his beauty to consume away, like a moth *fretting a garment*". In the *Knight's Tale* (2067–2068) Chaucer describes Actaeon devoured by his own dogs:

"I saugh how that his houndes have hym caught
And *freeten* hym, for that they knewe hym naught."

So "remorse" is from the Latin *remorsus*, from *remordere*, to bite again—a vivid metaphor for a

terrible emotion. And if you are "sarcastic" it means that you gnaw the flesh off your victims (the Greek *sarkazein*, to bite the flesh off, from *sark*). But if you are "scrupulous" you have some rather small uneasiness of conscience, like the discomfort caused by a bit of grit in your shoe—the Latin *scrupulus* means a small, sharp pebble. Hence the other meaning of the word; a "scruple" (or twenty grains in weight) was originally the weight of a little pebble.

The word "entice" has rather a curious history. The Latin *titio* means a firebrand, and from the late Latin *intitiare* has come the Old French *enticier*, to provoke, with the obvious development in the sense from kindling a fire to kindling a feeling of anger. To-day "entice" is restricted to the gentler kind of incitement, as "provoke", on the other hand, is now restricted to the less pleasant kind. In earlier days the translators of the Authorised Version could use the word in the good sense, "to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. x. 24). "Provoke" merely means at first to call forth, the Latin *provocare*.

It is rather striking to note that so many metaphorical usages of words are derived from the parts of the human body. We speak of the "head" of the State, or the "head" of a household, or the "head" of a stream, or a "head" of lettuce, or of so many "head" of cattle; of the "mouth" of a river, or the

"mouth" of a cannon, or the "mouth" of a jar; of the "teeth" of a comb, or the "teeth" of a saw; of the "neck" of a bottle, or of a "neck" of land; of the "eye" of a needle; of the "breast" of a wave; of the "ribs" of a ship; of the "heart" of a cabbage; of the "legs" of a table; of the "foot" of a bill; of the "hands" of a clock.

Take "hand", the last word mentioned. We speak of a "hand" of cards, of the "hands" in a factory, of a "handful" of anything. We make the word into an adjective, "handy", or ready to hand. We make another noun of it, a "handle", or what we grasp with the hand, and then a verb, "to handle". We use it again in "handsome", which originally meant pleasant to handle, and in innumerable other compounds. We take the Latin word for hand, *manus*, and talk of "manual" labour, and of "manufacture", which really means making things by hand; of the "manual" of an organ, and of a "manual" in the sense of a handbook. A "manner" is etymologically the way we handle ourselves or anyone else. A "manuscript" is a document written by the hand. The word "manifest" really means hand-struck, with the sense "so plain and palpable that it may be seized by the hand"; "manipulate" and "manage" mean to handle. The last word, from the French *manège*, means originally the training of a horse, as when Orlando says in *As You*

Like It (I. i): "His horses are bred better; they are taught their *manage*, and to that end riders dearly hired". The wider use of the word is seen in Prospero's speech in *The Tempest* (I. 2. 68-70):

"he whom next thyself
Of all the world I loved, and to him put
The *manage* of my state."

Then "manumit" means to send away from under one's hand, or authority. From *manus* and *opera*, work, there was a mediaeval Latin word *manuopera*, *manopera*, "the work of the hand". Now the French *manœuvrer*, derived from this, and meaning to work with the hands, came to mean to work a ship, and also to drill soldiers. To manœuvre a squadron of ships or a battalion of soldiers is to "handle" them, and place them in new positions and new formations. But the mediaeval *manopera*, or work of the hand, was mainly work on the land, or tillage, and to "manure" the land originally meant to till it. Then to "manure", from meaning to till, came to mean to fertilize, and so to enrich the ground with anything that fertilizes it; thus we get "manure" as a noun, in the sense of any fertilizing substance. The Latin *mandare* is probably from *manus* and *dare*, to give, and from meaning "to give into the hand" of someone, it acquires the sense "to commission", "to command". So we have "mandate", and also

from the late Latin *commandare*, through the French, "command". Then *commendare*, of the same origin, has much the same meaning, with the derived sense of "praise", so that we can say that we *commend* (or commit) something to a man's charge, and also that we *commend* (or praise) him for the way he executes his commission.

Then we take the Greek word for hand, *cheir*, and speak of "chiromancy", or the telling of fortunes by the lines of the hand, and of a "chiropodist", or one who deals with ailments affecting the hands and feet, and of a "surgeon", formerly a "chirurgeon", literally a handworker, because he operates with his hands upon the human body. Shakespeare uses the older form in *The Tempest* (ii. i. 137-140), where Gonzalo says:

"You rub the sore
When you should bring the plaster,"

and then adds:

"And most chirurgeonly."

What is "dexterous" means what is done with the right hand (Latin, *dexter*, the right hand). What is "sinister" is done with the left hand (Latin, *sinister*, the left hand). Most men are right-handed, and do things best with that hand; hence the sense of "dexterous". The left hand always carried with it a suggestion of something clumsy, and therefore unlucky; hence the sense of "sinister". The "des-

trier" or charger of the mediaeval knight was so called because it was led by the squire on his right hand (*dexter*); hence *dextrarius* is found in mediaeval texts for a war-horse. "Gawky" is the same word as the French *gauche*, and means left-handed, and therefore awkward.

Then take the foot. We speak of the "foot" of a hill, of the "foot" of the stairs, of the "foot" of a column in the newspaper, of the "feet" of chairs and tables and bedsteads, of "footing" it on the road, and of "footing" a bill, and we use "foot" as a measure of length. Chaucer uses the word in *The Franklin's Tale* (1177-1178) apparently of any short distance rather than of a precise measure:

"And er they ferther any *fote* wente
He tolde hem that was in hir entente."

Then "fetters" are really "footers", or shackles for the feet, as "manacles" are properly shackles for the hands (*manus*, hand); and while we are dealing with such things it may be added that "pester" in earlier days meant to hamper, for the word is from the Old French *empestrer*, from the late Latin *impastoriare*, from *pastorium*, a hobble for a horse (from *pascere*, to graze). Milton uses the word in something of its primary sense in *Comus* (6-7):

"With low thoughted-care
Confin'd, and *pester'd* in this pinfold here."

The later sense of the word has certainly been influenced by "pest", which is a different word altogether (Latin *pestis*, pestilence, plague). The reference to a hobble may serve to remind us also that "recalcitrant" (*recalcitrare*, from *calx*, heel) literally means "kicking back". So the word "spurn" really means to kick away with the foot, the sense in which Shakespeare uses it in *King John* (II. I. 23-24) of the English coast:

"that pale, that white-faced shore,
Whose foot *spurns* back the ocean's roaring tides"

(and "Spurn Head" at the mouth of the Humber derives its name by way of the same implicit metaphor). "Spur" is a related word; it is an instrument fastened to the foot with which you kick back at your steed.

Then we borrow the Latin word *pes*, *pedis*, and speak of the "pedal" of a cycle or a piano, of the "pedestal" of a pillar, of a "pedestrian", or one who goes afoot (and of a "pedometer" which measures his stride), and, in a metaphorical sense, of a "pedestrian" style where there is nothing like the daring leap or flight of imagination, and of a "pedigree" (which is from *pied de grue*, crane's foot, from the sign used in depicting lines of descent). We use the words "impede" and "impediment", from the Latin *impedire*, from *pes*, *pedis*, to entangle by the feet,

as when a bird is caught in a snare. We speak of a "biped", or an animal with two feet, and a "quadruped", with four, and a "centipede", with a hundred. Then we also borrow the Greek word for foot, *pous*, *podos*, and make of it familiar words like "tripod", for anything that stands on three feet; and "antipodes" for the other side of the world, where the feet of the people are opposite to the feet of those in this hemisphere; and a medical word, "podagra", for gout in the feet; and a multitude of scientific terms like "podocarp" and "podosperm" and "decapod" and "myriapod", and so on. Here are words derived from "hand" and "foot" which have developed so many special meanings that they are used of the very diverse subjects of agriculture, architecture, botany, genealogy, geography, horsemanship, industrialism, law, literature, measures, mechanics, medicine, music, superstition, sport, war, and zoology.

Then from the Latin *os*, *oris*, mouth, has come *orare*, which means to speak, and especially to speak in supplication, or to pray. Here is the source of our words *oral*, *orator*, *oration*, *oratory*, *oratorio*, *oracle*, *oracular*. "Oral" means simply spoken by the mouth and "oral instructions" stand opposed to "written instructions". The "orator" is a speaker, the "oration" is a speech, "oratory" is speaking, all in the eminent sense of the words, and a "peroration"

is the climax of a speech. An "oratory", in the other meaning of the word (*oratorium*), is a place of prayer, and the musical work called an "oratorio" derives its name from the fact that such compositions were first given in the *Oratory* of St. Philip Neri at Rome. An "oracle" is an inspired speech given in the name of a deity, and we say that a man speaks "oracularly" when he talks as if his words were such authoritative utterances. Then *adorare* means to speak reverently and supplicatingly, especially to a deity, and so we have our words "adore" and "adoration", which have not only the proper sense of worship, but have acquired the meaning of love, and even (in slang) of liking, as when the flapper declares that she "simply adores chocolates".

The word "nerve" properly means sinew, the Latin *nervus*; and "nervous" meant strong in older English. Shakespeare makes Hamlet say (I. 4. 82):

"My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's *nerve*,"

and we still say that a man writes "a nervous style". But "nerve" has a different sense in modern anatomy, being applied to the fibres which register sensation, and so "nervous" has come to mean timid and apprehensive. "Frenzy" is through the French *frenesie*,

from the Latin *phrenesis*, from the Greek *phrēn*, which means strictly the diaphragm, the midriff, but the word was used in the sense of mind, the middle part of the body being regarded as the seat of the emotions and the understanding. Then through the use of *phrenitis*, for disease of the mind, and inflammation of the brain, *phrenēsis* in late Greek and *phrenesis* in Latin acquired the sense of "frenzy". "Frantic" is a related word, from *phrenitikos*. We call a particular kind of morose temper the "spleen", because that organ was regarded as the source of such a feeling. In *Henry VIII* (III. 2. 99) Wolsey speaks of Anne Boleyn:

"What though I know her virtuous
And well deserving? yet I know her for
A spleeny Lutheran,"

and to-day we still use the word "splenetic".

A great many metaphorical uses of words are naturally borrowed from animals and their actions. The metaphors are obvious when we speak of "aping" someone we admire, or "badgering" someone we do not, or "crowing" over an opponent, of "dogging" someone's footsteps, or of "hounding" him down, of "ducking" the head, of "ferreting" out a mystery, or "worming" into a secret, or of a statesman "ratting"; or when we say that a man has a "leonine" head or an "elephantine" build; when

we speak of a "sheepish" look or a "currish" temper. There are some examples, however, which are not quite so obvious as these. If we "sneak" we are acting like a *snake*; if we "caper" or are "capricious" we are acting like a goat (*caper*); so the French word *verve* (which has almost been adopted into English) is from the late Latin *verva*, a sculptured ram's head (from *vervex*, bell-wether), and then comes to mean any caprice or fancy of an artist, and finally an artist's energy and enthusiasm. If we refer to the "Cynic" philosophers, or call someone a "cynic", we are etymologically likening them to a dog (*kuōn*). When Milton writes of "the *cynosure* of neighbouring eyes" the word he uses is the Greek *kunosoura*, "The Dog's Tail", the name of the constellation we call *Ursa Minor*, which contains the pole-star by which sailors steered.¹ The word "cynosure", from meaning the star which sailors watched intently, came to mean any object on which the attention was specially fixed.

But what connection would one expect between a dog, a quinsy, anguish, and anxiety? Our word "quinsy" is from the Old French *quinancie*, from the late Latin *quinancia*, which derives from the Greek *kunanchē*, literally "dog-throttling", used of a bad kind of sore throat (from *kuōn*, dog, and *anchein*, to throttle). Now *angina* is the Latin word for quinsy,

¹ Ovid, *Fasti*, III. 107-108.

from *angere* (plainly akin to *anchein*), which means to press together, and *angina pectoris* has become the name for one kind of heart disease. Then "anxious" is the Latin *anxius*, from *angere*, and etymologically means the feeling of being pressed together or strangled with fear. Then "anguish", from the Old French *anguisse*, derives from the Latin *angustia*, narrowness, and has a similar sense of being pressed together or constricted by pain.

An "urchin", which we use playfully of a child, is really a hedgehog (the Old French *herichon*, from the Latin *ericionem*). When we call anyone "shrewd" there is also a reference to an animal. The word "shrewd" now means acute, judicious, but it formerly had the sense of hurtful. Bacon writes in the essay *Of Wisdom for a Man's Self*: "An ant is a wise creature for itself, but it is a *shrewd* thing in an orchard or garden", and Shakespeare, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (ii. 2. 232), makes Ford say of his wife, "Some say that though she appear honest to me, yet in other places she enlargeth her mirth so far that there is *shrewd* construction made of her". The word probably derives from the "shrew"-mouse, which was believed to have malignant qualities. "Shrew" in the sense of an ill-tempered woman, and the old word "beshrew", have the same source. The word "coward", the Old French *courard*, is from the Latin

cauda, a tail. The word is a quaint and vivid metaphor from a frightened animal with a drooping tail. In the language of heraldry a *lion couard* is a lion with his tail between his legs. On the other hand, to "wheedle" means originally to wag the tail, as a dog does when he fawns upon you; in German *wedeln* means to wag the tail, and then to fan.

VIII

ODDITIES

THERE are a few words that have come into existence through mere mistake. "Helpmeet" is one. It derives from the passage in Genesis ii. 18: "I will make him an help meet for him", i.e. a helper who is meet, or suitable, for him. The noun and the following adjective were taken to be one word, and so "helpmeet" originated. "Culprit" is another mistaken word. In a mediaeval court of justice in England, when a prisoner had pleaded "Not Guilty", the Clerk of the Crown would answer *Culpable: prest*, which meant, in Norman French, "(He is) guilty (and we are) ready (to prove it)"—*culpable*, the Latin *culpabilis* (from *culpa*, a fault) we have adopted into English; and *prêt* exists in French, and had the form *prest* in Old French, from the Low Latin *praestus*, ready. In the official records *culpable: prest.* was abbreviated into *cul. prest.* and afterward corruptly into *cul. prit.* Then the Clerks of the Crown appear to have used *cul. prit.* as an oral formula, and since this was followed by the question to the prisoner, "How will you be tried?" the syllables *cul. prit.* were assumed to mean the accused person, or "culprit". The word appears

to be recorded first of all during the trial of the Earl of Pembroke in 1678.¹ Another word that has acquired a meaning different from the original sense, and by way of its use in legal documents of the past, is "purview". A section of a statute often began, in the Norman French used in old Acts of Parliament, with the words, *Purvue que . . .* "provided that . . ." Then the initial word came to mean the limit of legal reference, and so reached the present sense of "scope", or "extent".

The word "slughorn" occurs many times in Chatterton, as in *The Tournament*, where the herald says, "Methynkes I hear yer slughornes dynn from farre". One of Chatterton's eighteenth-century editors appends a note to the word, "a kind of claryon". Doubtless in consequence of the earlier poet's use of it the word also occurs in Browning's *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came*:

"Dauntless the *slug-horn* to my lips I set,
And blew."

Here is another word that is a pure mistake. It is an earlier spelling of "slogan", which is itself a

¹ The Italian word *busillis*, difficulty, is said to have originated with some ignoramus who was reading the Breviary, and came to *In die* at the foot of the page, followed by—*bus illis*, at the top of the next page—*in diebus illis*, "in those days". He could not make anything of *bus illis*, which consequently became a word meaning a puzzle, a difficulty! The derivation seems very far-fetched, but I do not know what the real etymology of *busillis* is.

contraction of the Gaelic *sluagh ghairm*, army yell, and which we have borrowed from the Highlanders and use in the sense of war-cry, and latterly in the sense of some reiterated phrase which expresses the purpose of a movement or a party. The translation of the *Aeneid* by Gawain Douglas, which appeared in 1513, contains the first recorded instance of "slogan". The spelling "slughorn", which he had seen somewhere, suggested to Chatterton that it was a sort of horn or trumpet.

Another of these mistaken words is "derring-do". Chaucer wrote in *Troilus and Criseyde* (v. 837) that Troilus was second to none: "In durring don that longeth to a knight". Spenser misunderstood the phrase, and taking "derring-do" as noun meaning "gallant deeds", used it more than once in that sense, as in *The Faerie Queene* (ii. 4. 42) where he says that Pyrochles was: "Drad for his derring doe and bloody deed". The word got more or less re-established in the language during the Romantic revival.

Some important words have derived by way of mere accident rather than misunderstanding. Thus "metaphysics", the name for ontology or the philosophy of being, means what it does simply because in the collection of Aristotle's writings his treatises on the subject of ontology came after his treatises on the natural sciences, and were called

meta ta phusika, "after the Physics". So the "Mass", the name for the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic Church, comes from the formula of dismissal which the priest utters at the end of the service, *Ite, missa est* (Go, you are dismissed). So, too, "requiem" acquired its present meaning because it is the first word of a beautiful introit in the Office of the Dead, *Requiem eternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis*, "Grant unto them eternal rest, O Lord, and enlighten them with perpetual light." The word has come to mean a funeral anthem, or a Mass for the Dead, but it is really the accusative of the Latin *requies*, rest. It is possible that "hocus-pocus", which we use in the sense of jugglery, derives from the words in the Mass, *Hoc est corpus meum*, "This is My body", and dates from the period of the Reformation when the Mass had come to be regarded as superstitious.¹

There are several examples in English where the modern form of the word differs from the older form because either the consonant of the article *an* has coalesced with the noun, or the first consonant

¹ Tillotson suggested this, in his *Discourse against Transubstantiation*. The derivation had been pretty well given up by etymologists latterly, but there is a strong confirmation of it in the phrase *hokus pokus filiokus*, which Professor Weekley quotes as in use in Norway and Sweden, for it seems to unite in one depreciatory rigmarole a memory both of the *Hoc est corpus* of the Mass and of the *filioque* clause in the Creed.

of the noun has coalesced with the article *a*. Thus "ewt" was the old form of the word, but "an ewt" has become "a newt". Similarly "an ekename", or a name that is *added* to your proper name (to "eke out" anything really means to *add* to it, and so make it last), has become "a nickname". On the other hand, "a nauger" has become "an auger"; "a napron" has become "an apron"; "a norange" (the Spanish *naranja* and the Arabic *naranj*) has become "an orange"; "a nadder" (German *Natter*) —the old form of the word which Chaucer uses in *The Merchant's Tale* (1786): "Lyk to the *naddre* in bosom sly untrewe"—has become "an adder", and, most interesting of all these examples, "a nouumper" has become "an umpire". We read in *Piers the Plowman* (v. 336–338) of a dispute in the tavern:

"Tyl Robyn the ropere · arose bi the southe,
And nempened hym for a *noumpere* · that no debate nere,
For to trye this chaffare · betwixen hem thre."

"Nouumper" is from the Old French *nomper* (which is really *non pair*, not equal). It meant an "odd man", a third person called in to arbitrate when two others could not reach an agreement.

There are some examples of this kind, where the article and the noun have become entangled, in other languages. Thus in French *un ombril* has

become *nombrial*, navel, and *l'ierre* has become *lierre*, ivy. (Has the verb *lier*, to bind, had any influence there, I wonder?) Ronsard writes *l'hierre*:

"Quand je voy les grands rameaux
Des ormeaux
Qui sont lacez de l'hierre."

Lierre is the Latin *hedera*, which became *hedra*, then *hierre*, then *ierre*. So *la munition* became *l'ammunition*, with the result that we have the two words in English, and can speak either of the soldier's "ammunition" or, more generally, of "munitions" of war.

The French *tante* is said to come from the possessive adjective coalescing with the noun, so that *tua amita* became *tante*. This seems doubtful, because *tante* does not occur before the thirteenth century, and it is certain that the form in older French was *ante*, whence our word "aunt". But an errant consonant has somehow prefixed itself to the word, which derived from *amita*, becoming first *amta*, and then *ante*, and finally *tante*. On the other hand, the Old French *lonce*¹, from the late Latin *luncea*, for *lyncea*, from *lynx*, became *once*, *lonce* being regarded as *l'once*, and this has given us our "ounce",

¹ The Italian word is *lonza*. Dante writes (*Inferno*, I. 32-33) of *una lonza leggiara e presto molto, Che di pel maculato era coperta*, "a leopard light and very nimble, which was covered with spotted hair".

the name of an animal of the leopard kind, as in Oberon's song in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (II. 2):

"Be it *ounce*, or cat, or bear,
Pard, or boar with bristled hair."

There are numerous examples, in words which have come to us through contact with the Moors, where the Arabic article *al* has coalesced with the noun, as in "alchemy", for *al-kimya*, "alcohol", for *al-kuhl*, and "alkali", for *al-qali*. The same thing has happened with the Spanish article *el* in the word "alligator", which is *el lagarto*, the Latin *lacertus*, lizard.

There are several examples where a word has reached its present meaning by a curious development from some circumstance in the days of feudalism. Oddly enough, the French substantive *coterie*, and the French adjective *banal*, which we have adopted into English and use as literary jargon, are both instances of this. "Coterie" (related to our word "cot") is from the Old French *cotier*, a dweller in a cot, and the word *coterie* originally meant an association of *cotiers* holding land from the lord of the manor. Now we use it of a literary or artistic "set". "Banal", which we use (generally with some literary or aesthetic reference) in the sense of undistinguished and commonplace, is also a legacy from feudalism. *Ban* is a word of German origin,

which meant a proclamation or an ordinance—the former sense still survives in English when we speak of publishing “the banns of marriage”. Now, as Victor Hugo has remarked in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, one of the most irritating oppressions of the Middle Ages was that there were mills, ovens, and wells at which the vassals were bound by the *ban* or order of their manorial lord to grind their corn, bake their bread, and draw their water, in each case paying for the privilege in one way or another. These mills, ovens, and wells were called *moulins banaux*, *fours banaux*, *puits banaux*. Hence *banal* meant what was used by everybody alike, and thence came the sense of common, vulgar, trite.

The mention of the manorial mill may serve to remind us that we owe the word “emolument” to the mill (*mola*). The Latin *emolumentum* was at first, in all probability, the miller’s toll (from *emolere*, to grind). *Multura* was the usual mediaeval term for the miller’s share of the meal which paid him for grinding it. This was sometimes called *multa* or *moultie* in French, from the Latin *multa*, *multa*, whence we also get our “mulct”. (The word *multa* in Old High German meant “toll”, and in Middle High German *mousse* meant “a miller’s fee”.) It has been happily suggested that this use of *multa* explains the passage in *Piers the Plowman* (x. 44), where the miller takes *Multa fecit Deus*

to assert the divine right of mill toll!¹ The greed of millers was a familiar theme in the Middle Ages, as a proverb like "The miller has a golden thumb" is sufficient to bear witness.

The mention of the miller's thumb may serve to recall an odd connection in English and an odd contraction in French. What is the relation between a finger "nail" and a carpenter's "nail"? "Nail" derives from the Anglo-Saxon *naeglian*, to fasten, and a finger "nail" is etymologically that with which you *fasten* on to anything, as a beast fastens on to his prey with his claws, while a carpenter's "nail" is the spike with which he *fastens* pieces of wood together. The French word for thimble, *dé*, is a queer example of the shortening of a word. *Digitale*, from *digitus*, finger, became successively *dale*, *déel*, *del*, and *dt*. Our word "thimble" is derived from "thumb".

The Anglo-Saxon *cierran*, to turn, is probably the source of several words which one would hardly expect to be related. It is possibly the first syllable in "charcoal", with the meaning of wood *turned* into coal (our actual verb "char", in the sense of burning, is formed from "charcoal", and not the other way round). A "charwoman" means a woman who does a *turn* of work, as in the quaint old English proverb, "That char is char'd, as the good wife

¹ Coulton, *The Mediaeval Village*, p. 56.

said when she hanged her husband".¹ So, too, in Shakespeare, as in *Antony and Cleopatra* (v. 2, 231-232), where the tragic queen says to Charmian:

"And when thou hast done this *chare* I'll give thee leave
To play till doomsday."

This is the same word as "chore", which is in use in America. When we say that a door is "ajar" it means that it is *a-char*, "on the char", or "on the turn".

A word with a very odd history is "cockney". It meant originally a cock's egg. There was an old belief that small eggs were sometimes laid by cocks. *Ey* is the common word for egg in Middle English. The original sense of a small egg is in *Piers the Plowman* (v. 286-287) where Piers says:

"I have no salt bacoun,
Ne no *kokeney*, by crist · coloppes forto maken."

The development of meaning has been curious. Chaucer uses the word in *The Reeve's Tale* (4207-4208):

"And when this jape is tald another day,
I sal been halde a daf, a *cokenay*!"

where it evidently means a fool or a milksop. From a small egg, the word apparently came to mean a pet, a mother's darling, and so an effeminate person;

¹ Ray, *Proverbs*, p. 182.

then it was applied to a townsman, in contrast to the harder and ruder rustic; then, in the seventeenth century, it became appropriated to a Londoner.

While we are dealing with eggs it may be remarked that there are some curious examples of words which are really exact parallels, though they do not look like that, at first sight. Thus we speak of "the *white* of an egg", and "the *yolk* of an egg" is a similar reference to colour, for "yolk" is from the Anglo-Saxon *gelk*, akin to *gealewe*, and the German *gelb*, yellow. The "yolk" is "the *yellow* of the egg".

What an eighteenth-century poet would have called "the ovarious theme" may also remind us of the fact that some words and usages that most people would put down at once as modern slang are really quite old. We speak of "egging" somebody on to do something, and probably we should avoid the phrase in serious writing as slangy. But in *Piers the Plowman* (Prologue 64) it is said of the "Fader of falshed", the Devil, that: "Adam and Eue he egged to ille". So also in Chaucer, where Custance makes her lament to the Virgin (*The Man of Law's Tale*, 841-844):

"Mooder, quod she, and mayde bright Marie,
Sooth is, that thurgh womarnes eggement
Mankind was lorne, and damned aye to die,
For which thy Child was on a crois yrent."

Here the verb "to egg" is not etymologically the same word as the noun "egg", but appears to be from the Old Norse *eggja*, edge, with the sense of tempting or instigating anyone by way of the thought of leading them over the brink of action.

"Treacle" is a homely word, but it has an interesting derivation, and we owe it to classical times. The Greek word *thēr* means a beast, and a diminutive, *thērion*, was used of the viper; it is the word used in Acts xxviii. 5, when the viper fastened on the Apostle Paul's hand and "he shook off *the beast* into the fire". Now the Greeks thought that a compound of viper's flesh was an antidote to the viper's bite—a notion not so far removed from some of the principles of modern medicine—and they called this remedy *theriakē*. This passed into Latin as *theriaca*. The word gradually acquired the meaning of a general antidote, and then of any medical compound used as a remedy—the sense of "balsam", in fact. So we have the word in Chaucer, *The Man of Law's Tale* (479), "Christ, that is to every harm *triacle*", and in *Piers the Plowman* (l. 146), "For trewthe telleth that love is *triacle* of heuene". The Bishops' Bible, which appeared in 1568, is often called the "Treacle Bible", because it renders Jeremiah viii. 22: "Is there no *tryacle* in Gilead, is there no phisition there?" Coverdale's Bible also rendered the passage: "There is no more *triacle*

at Galaad". This use of the word occurs as late as Quarles, who wrote (*Emblem* ii. Book v):

"Thou art the balsam that must cure my wound:
If poison chance t'infest my soul in fight,
Thou art the *treacle* that must make me sound."

The word, in fact, meant a medicinal syrup, and then simply a syrup, and finally has come to mean what is otherwise called molasses. The word "molasses", by the way, is from the Portuguese *melaço*, which goes back to the Latin *mellaceus*, honey-like.

Many words have acquired a meaning oddly different from the original sense of the word whence they are derived. Thus the Latin *fallere*, to deceive, which is the root of our "fail", "fallible", "fallacy", "fallacious", came to mean to fail, then to be lacking, and so to be necessary; hence the modern French *il faut*, "it is necessary", "one must", as in phrases like *Faut-il de demander?* "Is it necessary to ask?" and *Il me faut de l'argent*, "I must have some money".

There are several words used of the mentally deficient which have a curious origin. Some are merciful euphemisms, like our use of an "innocent" for an idiot, and the French *crétin*, a name used first of all for the deformed idiots who used to abound in the valleys of the Alps. The word came into French from the patois of the Grisons and is simply a doublet of *chrétien*, Christian. "Lunatic" means

moon-struck, for there is an ancient and widespread belief as to an association between the moon and madness. The word "imbecile" is the Latin *imbecillus*, probably for *imbacillus*, as if "without a staff", and hence unsupported and weak. The Latin *bacillum* or *bacillus* means a small staff (from *baculum* or *baculus*), and our medical words "bacillus", "bacilli", were brought into use because some minute organisms found in diseased tissues are shaped like little rods. The word "bacteria" has a similar source; it is from the Greek *baktēria*, a rod or cane, and the diminutive *baktērion*, a little rod.

There are some interesting examples where a personal name has given a title or a word to several languages. The name of Julius Caesar has become the German *Kaiser*, and the Russian *Tzar*, with the meaning of Emperor. Similarly the word for "king" in Lithuanian is *karalius*, in Russian *korol*, in Polish *krol*, in Magyar *kiraly*, all derived from Carolus, or Charles the Great, the famous Frankish Emperor commonly known as Charlemagne. There are several less dignified examples in English, like "sandwich", from the eighteenth-century Earl of Sandwich, who was an inveterate gambler and sometimes spent a whole day at cards with only a slice of meat between two slices of bread by way of food. So the useful garment known as a "mackintosh" derives its name from Charles Mackintosh,

who invented the waterproof fabric in the early days of the last century. The word "derrick", for a crane, is from the name of Derrick, the hangman at Tyburn in the early seventeenth century. Perhaps the oddest of all these words is "cicerone". The word derives from the name of the great Roman orator Cicero. The loquacity of the professional guides in Italy reminded the Italians of the eloquence of Cicero! It is sometimes asserted that the small piece of ornamental linen called a "doily" owes its designation to a London shopkeeper of that name in the seventeenth century. It may be so, but in that case it is a very odd coincidence that the manor of Fish Hill was held by "yielding to the king a table-cloth of three shillings in price", and that the family of d'Oily held it, their ancestor, Robert d'Oily, having come over with the Conqueror.

There is always a tendency to change a word that has anything unfamiliar or unintelligible in its form into something less strange and apparently more significant. Thus "lantern" is from the Latin *lanterna*, but in the days before glass was common horn was often used in the construction of a lantern, and thus it became "lanthorn". So "asparagus", borrowed direct from the Latin, is popularly changed into "sparrow-grass", and *écrevisse*, from the French, becomes first "crevesse" and then "cray-fish". The name of the gooseberry in French

is *graselle*, in Italian *grossularia*, in Spanish *grosella*: the word appears to be derived from the Old High German *kransselbeere*. The older form of the word is still preserved in dialect as "grosen"—when I lived in the county of Durham the country folk always used that form—but "groseberry" has become "gooseberry", the name of a familiar bird taking the place of what had become an unfamiliar syllable. Another example of this is "liquorice". The word comes from the late Latin *liquiritia*, corrupted from *glycyrrhiza*, "the sweet root" (the Greek *glukus* and *rhiza*). Now the name "liquorice" has obviously been assimilated to "liquor" and "orris", both words which conveyed something to the Englishman of the Middle Ages, since he was perfectly familiar with liquor of various kinds and with orris-root. This last, which was so much used in earlier days as a perfume, was the root of the "iris", "orris", or *fleur-de-lys*. So the "girasole artichoke" became the "Jerusalem artichoke" because the Italian *girasole*, which means "turning to the sun," conveyed nothing to the English cultivator, except a suggestion of likeness to the familiar word "Jerusalem". Similarly "wormwood" was originally *wermod*—*wer* as in "werwolf," "man-wolf", and *mod* (our word "mood") in the sense of courage, as in the German *Muth*. The name "man's courage" may be due to the use of the herb

as an aphrodisiac. The word is *Wermuth* in German and *vermout* in French. It has nothing whatever to do with either worm or wood. The word "curtail" is another example of this. Like the word "curt" it derives from the Latin *curtus*, short. It has come to us through the Old French *courtald*, as "curtal", a horse with ears or tail docked. Then this was made into a verb, to "curtail", but the form was evidently influenced by the words "cur" and "tail", as if there was in it a suggestion of docking a dog's tail. So Cloten says in *Cymbeline* (II. I. 10-12): "When a gentleman is disposed to swear, it is not for any standers-by to curtail his oaths, ha?" and one of the attendants answers, "No, my lord; nor crop the ears of them".

This kind of folk-etymology, which attempts to explain some obsolete form by assimilating it to words that are still in use, is constantly found in connection with place-names. The local explanation of Teddington is "Tide-end-town", in spite of the fact that in early days the tide went much further up the Thames, and in spite of the fact that the name obviously means "the town of the Tedings", exactly as Birmingham is "the home of the Beormings", and so on endlessly. I have been assured by a Northumbrian peasant on the spot that the town of Haltwhistle owes its name to the fact that when the railway was made, there was a notice to engine-

drivers ordering them to "halt" and "whistle"! As a matter of fact the name of the town has existed from time immemorial; it used to be spelt in the sixteenth century *Haltwesell*, and much earlier *Aldwysel*. The name appears to derive from the Anglo-Saxon *rwisla*, a fork in a river or a road, with the prefix *halt*, high. There is a good example of popular etymology in the name and the legend of Shotover, near Oxford. It was Château Vert, but the French words, meaningless to an English peasant were first corrupted into Shotover, and then this led to the growth of a legend that Little John, the associate of Robin Hood, "shot over" the hill there.

The same tendency is found in many words, apart altogether from the names of places, when an early formation has later on become unfamiliar. "Sweetard" was the old form, like "sluggard", and meant the same as "sweet" or "sweeting", but it became "sweet-heart", as if it had a reference to the heart. So "shamefast" was the old form of the word, like "steadfast", but it became "shame-faced", as if it had a reference to the face.

A somewhat different example is "sty", in the sense of a little eruption on the eyelid. From the Anglo-Saxon *stigan*, to rise, there was formed the word *stigend*, which became "styan" and "styany". Then this was taken to be "sty-on-the-eye", and so we get "sty", in this sense. A related word is "stir-

rup", which is the Anglo-Saxon *stigrap*, or "mounting rope". The German word is *Steigbügel*—for *steigen* in German means to mount, to ascend, as *stigan* did in Anglo-Saxon, and *Bügel* means a bow or a hoop. The "sty" in "pigsty" is from the Anglo-Saxon *stig*, a word the root of which occurs in several Teutonic languages in the sense of a pen for fowls or cattle.

Some words that came into existence as ancient slang have established themselves in more than one language. An interesting example of this is the French word *tête*. We should naturally expect some form of the Latin *caput*, exactly as *main*, hand, is from *manus*, and *pied*, foot, is from *pes*, *pedis*, and *corps*, body, is from *corpus*, and so on, but instead we find a word which has come from *testa*, which means a tile, or an earthen pot. The slang use of this word for head (much as we use "tile" in a slangy way for "hat") led to the development *testa*, *teste*, *tête*. It is true, of course, that *caput* is represented both in French and Italian, and is used in several specialized senses, but the main meaning of it has been taken over by *tête* and *testa*. So in German the word *Haupt* (akin to our "head") survives in some transferred uses, but has been replaced in its central meaning by *Kopf* (akin to our "cup").

Now the Old French word *teste* has given us several words in English. Chaucer uses "tester" of

a head-piece, a helmet. Shakespeare frequently uses "tester", but with him it always means the coin, which was so called because it bore a head. The other word "tester", still in use in dialect, means the canopy (or head) of a bed. Chaucer uses "testif" in the sense of headstrong, obstinate, as where he says of Diomede, in *Troilus and Criseyde* (v. 802), that he was: "Hardy, *testif*, strong, and chevalrous". We still use the word "testy", but it has come to mean peevish. We also use "test" in the sense of trial; this is from *testa*, the alchemist's pot or crucible where metals were tried.

The advent of Christianity influenced the use and the sense of a few Latin words in a remarkable way. Some words became almost sacrosanct. In the development of French, for example, the Latin *verbum*, word, the equivalent of the Greek *logos*, passed out of ordinary use (probably because of the religious sense of it—Christ as *Verbum Dei*, the Word of God incarnate) and was replaced by *parabola*, parable. This is the Greek *parabolē*, which literally means "what is thrown together" (from *paraballein*, to throw beside) and so a comparison, a similitude. Now *parabola* became *parole*, and *parabolare* became *paroler* and then *parler*, to speak. Hence numerous English words like "parlance", speech; "parley", to speak with an enemy; "parlour", which meant originally "the talking room" (as "boudoir", in

Old French *bouderie* from *bouder*, to pout, meant "the sulking room"); and "Parliament", which Carlyle called "the talking-shop". The word "palaver" belongs to the same category; it is from the Portuguese *palavra*, and was brought to England from the coast of Africa. It derives from *parabola*.

Our word "imp" is the Anglo-Saxon *impa*, a shoot of a tree, or a graft. So in *Piers the Plowman* (v. 136-137) Anger says:

"I was sumtyme a frere,
And the couentes gardyner · for to graffe ympes."

Chaucer also uses the word in that sense. In *The Monk's Tale* (3144) he writes: "Of feble trees ther comen wreched *impes*". Then "imp", like "scion", which means the same thing, was used in the sense of an offshoot of humanity, or a child. In *King Henry the Fifth* Pistol says that the king is

"A lad of life, an *imp* of fame
Of parents good."

Sir Thomas Wyatt wrote of Anne Boleyn, "In this noble *imp* the graces of nature graced by a gracious education seemed even at first to have promised bliss unto hereafter times". Then, from being used in a phrase like "an imp of hell", for "a child of hell", the word came to have its present sense of a small demon.

The word "noisome" is from the Latin phrase *in odio habere*, to hold in hatred, which becomes *inodiare*, then in Old French *enoier*, then in English "annoy", and then, from "noy", the old shortened form of that word, we have "noisome". From *enoier*, again, modern French has derived the words *ennuyer* and *ennui*; the latter word has almost become naturalized in English. Nowadays both in French and in English the sense of the words is slight. "Annoyance" and "ennui" are rather trivial states of mind. But "annoy" used to have a stronger sense of hurtfulness, and Shakespeare always uses the word in that way, as in *Julius Caesar* (I. 3. 20-22) where Casca says:

"Against the Capitol I met a lion,
Who glared upon me, and went surly by
Without annoying me,"

the sense being plainly "without attacking or injuring me".

We may append to these words which relate to states of mind and nerve and temper the curious word "umbrage", since ill-tempered and unnerved folk are apt to "take umbrage" at this or that. It is the French *ombrage*, shade, shadow, from the Latin *umbraticum*. The original sense of the word is kept in Shakespeare, where Hamlet says (v. 2. 125-126): "His semblable is his mirror, and who else would

trace him, his *umbrage*, nothing more". The word has got its present sense either from a horse which shies at its shadow, or from being "thrown into the shade", as we say, by somebody else, and taking offence in consequence. The Latin *umbra*, shadow, has also given us the word "umbrageous", and (through the Italian *ombrello*, a little shade) our name for that useful article in this climate, the "umbrella".

We do not always see the radical relation between different words with different meanings, even when it lies before our very eyes. The words are from the same root, for example, when we speak of "a *quick* movement", "a *wicked* man", and "the *wick* of a candle". The word "quick" originally means alive, as in the Creed "He shall come to judge the *quick* and the dead". We still speak of the "quick" of the finger nails, or the part that is alive and sensitive, and "wick" is found in many English dialects in the sense of lively. When we speak of the "wick" of the candle, we mean the part that is alive with flame. The word "wicked" derives its present sense by the development of meaning from alive—lively—turbulent—evil.

Some words have degenerated very oddly. The word "dame" is the same word as "dam", which is now used exclusively of animals, while "sire" is used both in addressing a monarch and in referring

to the paternity of a horse. We use "beldam" of an ugly old woman, but it really means "beautiful lady" (*belle dame*). *Beldame* was used in earlier English as a courteous name for a grandmother, and *belsire* was used in the same way for a grandfather. From meaning "grandmother" the word "beldam" came to mean any old woman, and finally any old hag. So "hussy" is the same word as housewife, but it has degenerated into the sense of a hoyden.

On the other hand, a word of humble origin sometimes became the parent of very distinguished children. When we speak of the "palings" around the garden we suggest such a series. The word *palus* means a stake set in the ground. Then "pale" comes to mean an enclosure, and so we speak of "the Pale" in Ireland (an area that was fortified by the castles of the Anglo-Norman barons, and so enclosed), and of anyone as "beyond the pale". The word "palisade" has the same origin, but comes to us through the French. Then "palace" is from the residence of the Emperors on the Mons Palatinus at Rome, but the mount probably got its name from the word for stake, because it was fenced. Then we derive from "palace" words like "palatial", "patine", and "paladin". The "Count Palatine" superintended the household of the Carolingian Emperors, and the "Palatinatus" on the upper Rhine was his

fief. The later Electors Palatine lived at the Pfalz, the *palace* on the picturesque island in the river. From the name of the Count Palatine, the word "paladin" was applied in legend to the twelve peers of Charlemagne, and so came to carry its present significance of high chivalry. A "county palatine" in England, such as Chester, Lancaster, or Durham, derives its name from the fact that as these shires were far from the capital and near the borders, the Earl of Chester, the Duke of Lancaster, and the Prince-Bishop of Durham exercised a quasi-royal authority—in Durham, for example, the Bishop coined his own money, administered his own laws, executed his own criminals, and was generally a viceroy of the North. It is a quaint fact of history that a homely word meaning a wooden stake should have left such a trail of derived words and derived meanings behind it, in every land in Europe, and through all the years from the Ceasars down to Charlemagne, and from the Middle Ages down to our own day.

Another example of a dignified word (at least in some of its uses) which had a humble beginning is "court". There is a whole series of related words found in all the languages of Europe which derive from the original meaning of an enclosure. The Greek *chortos* means, first, an enclosed place; then a feeding place for cattle; and then fodder, food.

The Latin *hortus* also means first of all an enclosure, and then a garden, an orchard, or a vineyard. Pliny uses it of a country house. The Anglo-Saxon *geard*, a related word, means an enclosure, again, whence our "yard", and also "garth"—the farmers in Lincolnshire still speak of the "stack-garth"—and there are parallel forms in the Slavonic languages which are familiar in names like Belgrade and Novgorod, while another related word, the French *jardin*, has given us our "garden". Now closely connected with *hortus* and all these other words is the Latin *cohors*, *cohortem*, which means again an enclosure, a yard, especially for cattle. (The military "cohort", the tenth part of a legion, was probably so called because of its square formation.) *Cohortem* is used of a farm by Palladius and also by Varro, who tells us that the rustic pronunciation was *cortem*. This was succeeded by *curtem*, which is used, in the time of the Franks, of the country-house of a lord, of his household, and of the administration of the laws, or the "court" of justice, held in his name. Then *curtem* becomes *court* and *cour* in French and "court" in English, with the special meanings of the place where the monarch dwells or the judge presides, though we still retain the primitive sense of an enclosure when we speak of a "tennis-court" and in several other similar uses.

The origin of chess has been the subject of much

research and of much debate. The game seems to have been invented in India, and to have passed thence to the Persians and the Arabs. It came to Europe, from the Arabs, about the eleventh century. The name "chess" has come to us from the Old French plural *esches*. (The singular was *esche*, the modern *échec*.) The word is really the Persian *shah*, king, because the game took its name from the principal piece. "Check" is a doublet of this, and originally had the sense of "(Watch your) king!" "Checkmate", from the French *échec et mat*, is ultimately from the Persian phrase *shah mat*, "the king is dead". "Chequer" is shortened from "exchequer", the Old French *eschequier*, chessboard, and to call anything "chequered" properly means that it is partly black and partly white. "Exchequer" derives its present sense from the fact that counters were used on a table marked with squares to keep a reckoning of the royal revenue. "Cheque" is a form of "check", and appears to have been applied first of all to the counterfoil, which keeps a tally of the amount. So when you draw a *cheque*, or *check* the items in an account, or refer to the Chancellor of the *Exchequer*, or say that someone has had a *chequered* career, you are using words that all derive from the game of chess, and that all go back ultimately to an Eastern word for "king".

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